

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 24, 2022
VIA ZOOM WEBINAR

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) held a regularly scheduled Board meeting on Thursday, March 24, 2022 via ZOOM Webinar conferencing. The meeting began at 10:30 a.m.

Vice-Chair Janet Evans chaired the meeting and called the meeting to order. The Commissioners in attendance were: Ms. Tammy Thompson, Ms. Janet Evans, Rev. Ricky Burgess, Alex Laroco, Ms. Cheryl Gainey and Mr. Majestic Lane. Mrs. Valerie McDonald-Roberts was not in attendance.

Next, the Vice-Chair noted that the Board members previously received a copy of the February 24, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes and asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Alex Laroco made a motion to approve the minutes and Cheryl Gainey seconded the motion.

A vote being had thereon, the “Ayes and “Nays” were as follows:

“AYES”: Janet Evans, Alex Laroco, Cheryl Gainey.

“NAYS”: None

The Chair declared the motion carried and the minutes approved.

Next the Ms. Evans introduced the Activity Report portion of the meeting. She asked for a motion to approve the Activity Report as previously provided to the Commissioners. Alex Laroco made a motion to approve and Cheryl Gainey seconded the motion.

Michelle Sandidge presented the March Activity Report:

Resident Employment Program is off and running, averaging about 2 residents hires a week. YTD we have secured employment for 22 residents.

Please join us for Coping with Covid 19, a Facebook Live conversation on April 21st @ 10am with CFV and Covid 19 Resident ambassadors as they explore the pandemic present effects of stress, anxiety, home schooling, mental health, domestic violence, returning to work anxiety and child abuse. Sponsored by Highmark Wholecare which is Gateways new name.

Finally allow me to introduce and welcome Dr. Karen Garrett to our team, as she begins her new role transitioning from the HCV department to the Director of the RSS department, effective Monday the 3/28/22.

End of Activity Report.

A vote being had thereon, the “Ayes and “Nays” were as follows:

“AYES”: Janet Evans, Alex Laroco, and Janet Evans.

“NAYS”: None

The Vice-Chair declared the motion carried and the Activity Report approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were two public comment submitted.

#1

Name: Gail Felton

Phone number: 412-261-0922

Email: gfelton2305@gmail.com

Want response: yes

Want read: yes

Comment:

March 23, 2022

“Where there is no vision, there is no hope.”

This quote is often attributed to George Washington Carver, one of America's most prominent and innovative Black scientists. Carver, while highly educated and accomplished, had the innate ability to see situations and circumstances not only as they were, but also how they could be and how they should be. Dr. Carver created solutions that yielded results and that ultimately served the greater good. Similarly, here at the Housing Authority City of Pittsburgh we have a visionary leader who, for the past 10+ years, has worked tirelessly to transform public housing across the City of Pittsburgh from the old brick walk ups and densely populated hi-rises to highly sought after communities, where residents and their families are afforded the opportunity to enjoy modern, safe, and affordable housing.

Caster D. Binion has been a leader on a mission, and throughout his tenure as executive director he has raised the standard for public housing communities throughout this area. He has committed his energy to changing the experience of public housing for low income families, the elderly, and those with disabilities. He has curated a talented and committed leadership team, who in turn, have rallied HACP staff to provide excellent customer service to every resident and potential resident of the Authority. And most importantly, he has contributed to rehabilitating the perception of public housing and how society thinks and feels about the families whom it serves.

Caster has been an outstanding leader and we are excited for what the future holds for the Authority.

As such, as the resident leaders of the Housing Authority City of Pittsburgh we enthusiastically

submit this letter in full support of Caster's continued partnership and leadership of HACP.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the leadership of the Resident Advisory Board

#2

Name: Gail Felton

Phone number: 412-520-5882

Email: turnerdsr8@gmail.com

Want response: Yes

Want read: Yes

Comment: I Miss Gail Felton, the President of Bedford Tenant Council, would like to say that Mr. Binion has done a terrific job in all communities and we would love to have him back. He is a great Leader who continues to bring communities together

Rev. Burgess and Majestic Lane joined the meeting at this time.

Next, Chair, Ms. Evans introduced the Resolutions:

RESOLUTION No. 15 of 2022

A Resolution - Authorizing the Executive Director or Designee to Amend the existing contract with Salsgiver Inc. for the Internet Services Contract Authority-Wide

WHEREAS, the Information Technology (IT) Department of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) is required to provide secure and expedient Internet Access across all of its properties for the HACP Staff to effectively provide services to applicants, landlords and tenants; and

WHEREAS, the HACP is currently under contract with Salsgiver Inc. to provide Internet and Firewall Services Authority-wide; and

WHEREAS, the initial value of the contract in the amount of \$48,000.00 with Salsgiver Inc. is exhausted; and

WHEREAS, the IT Department of the HACP needs to continue provisioning secure internet access across all of the HACP locations in addition, to the new Administrative Office located at 412 Boulevard of Allies in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, the HACP is requesting to add \$81,600.00 and add two (2) additional years to the current contract of Salsgiver Inc. to ensure the HACP continues to have secure Internet Services until January 1, 2024 and pay all outstanding invoices.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh:

Section 1. Authorize the Executive Director or Designee to add funds to the existing contract with Salsgiver Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$81,600.00 for a total contract amount not to exceed \$129,600.00 and extend the end date to January 1, 2024; and

Section 2. The additional funds to fulfill the contract with Salsgiver Inc. will be paid from Moving To Work (MTW) and/or Program Income funds.

Next, Ms. Evans asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Rev. Burgess made a motion to approve the resolution and Majestic Lane seconded the motion. After a discussion: A vote being had thereon, the “Ayes and “Nays” were as follows:

“AYES”: Janet Evans, Alex Laroco, Rev. Burgess,
Majestic Lane and Cheryl Gainey.

“NAYS”: None

The Chair declared the motion carried and the resolution approved.

RESOLUTION No. 16 of 2022

A Resolution—Authorizing the Executive Director or his Designee to enter into contract with Reliant It to upgrade the Security Camera System Pursuant to a HUD Safety and Security Grant Award for the Allegheny Dwellings and Bedford Dwellings Family Communities

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) an Emergency Safety and Security Grant (Security Grant) in response to Notice PIH-2016-03, a total of \$250,000 to upgrade camera systems at Allegheny Dwellings and Bedford Dwellings; and

WHEREAS, the funds from the Security Grant will continue to assist law enforcement in ongoing efforts to eradicate crime at Allegheny Dwellings and Bedford Dwellings communities and create a more peaceful environment; and

WHEREAS, the HACP submitted the required documents to HUD on April 22, 2021 and the grant funds must be obligated no later than April 8, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the HACP procured a company under a pilot program to install cameras in one (1) of the family communities with the intent of extending the system into other family communities managed by the HACP; and

WHEREAS, as the HACP was not able to determine the success of the pilot installation, in December of 2021, the HACP reviewed the Reliant IT camera system currently utilized in family and high-rise communities managed by the Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA) and was satisfied that the Reliant IT system could meet the needs of the HACP; and

WHEREAS, the HACP has experienced a significant increase in criminal activity based on several factors to include, warmer weather, the relaxation of COVID restrictions and the current camera systems do not meet the needs of the HACP; and

WHEREAS, to address the immediate need of additional security enhancements in the Allegheny Dwellings and Bedford Dwellings communities, the HACP desires to contract with Reliant IT in the amount not to exceed \$375,000.00 to replace the existing camera systems and provide maintenance and monitoring services; and

WHEREAS, this procurement was conducted in accordance with applicable State and Federal Regulations and the procurement policies and procedures of the HACP.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh:

Section 1. The Executive Director or his Designee is hereby authorized to enter into a contract with Reliant IT, to install Verkada security cameras at the Allegheny Dwellings and Bedford Dwellings family communities, not to exceed \$375,000.00; and

Section 2: It is the goal of the HACP to fully install these upgraded security cameras in the Allegheny and Bedford Dwellings family communities by July 2022 and the monitoring and maintenance contract will continue for one (1) year from the date of camera installations; and

Section 3. The contract shall be payable from the Emergency Safety and Security Grant and Moving to Work (MTW) funds.

Janet Evans asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Majestic Lane made a motion to approve the resolution. Rev. Burgess seconded the motion. After a discussion:

A vote being had thereon, the “Ayes and “Nays” were as follows:

“AYES”: Janet Evans, Alex Laroco, Rev. Burgess,
Majestic Lane and Cheryl Gainey.

“NAYS”: None

The Chair declared the motion carried and the resolution approved.

Ms. Tammy Thompson joined the meeting at this time.

RESOLUTION No. 17 of 2022

A Resolution – Approving the Low-Income Public Housing (LIPH) Utility Allowance Schedule for 2022

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that public housing authorities maintain up-to-date utility allowance schedules in accordance with 24 CFR 965.507; and

WHEREAS, public housing authorities must establish utility allowance schedules based upon the typical cost of utilities and services paid by energy conservative households that occupy housing of comparable size and type in the same locality; and

WHEREAS, PHAs must review the utility allowance schedule each year to ensure participants receive a utility allowance in accordance with the current average utility pricing; and

WHEREAS, public housing authorities must review their utility allowance schedule each year; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP), Low-Income Public Housing Program (LIPH) must comply with federal guidelines and requirements pertaining to public utilities in establishing utility allowances; and

WHEREAS, the HACP's LIPH Program, in order to meet federal guidelines and requirements, contracts with a utility consultant and revises its allowances each year to reflect the most up to date cost; and

WHEREAS, the HACP recommends the adoption of proposed utility Allowance schedule, attached hereto as Exhibit A.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh as follows:

Section 1. The proposed Utility Allowance schedule is hereby adopted, subject to HUD approval, if required; and

Section 2. The Executive Director or his Designee of the HACP is hereby authorized to update the Utility Allowance schedule effective May 1, 2022.

EXHIBIT A

HIGH RISE COMMUNITIES

(Caliguiri Plaza, Carrick Regency, Finello Pavilion, Gualtieri Manor, Morse Gardens)

Bedroom Size	High Rises
Studio	\$36.00
1	\$40.00

TRADITIONAL SCATTERED SITES

Bedroom Size	Row/Town House	Detached House	New Construction (All Gas) *	New Construction (All Electric) *
2	\$140.00	\$154.00	\$128.00	\$125.00
3	\$167.00	\$184.00	\$153.00	\$149.00
4	\$194.00	\$214.00	\$178.00	\$172.00
5	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$196.00

MANCHESTER (PHASES 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Bedroom Size	Manchester Row/Town House	Manchester Row/Town House (All Electric)	Manchester Apartments (Phase 3)
1	N/A	\$96.00	\$89.00
2	\$146.00	\$129.00	\$111.00
3	\$172.00	\$152.00	N/A
4	\$199.00	\$180.00	N/A

EAST LIBERTY SCATTERED SITES

Bedroom Size	East Liberty Scattered Sites Detached *	East Liberty Row/Town House (All Electric) *	East Liberty Row/Town House (Gas & Electric) *	East Liberty Large Apartment 6449 Centre Ave. *
2	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$89.00
3	\$163.00	\$136.00	\$148.00	N/A

***Low-Income Public Housing (LIPH) Scattered Site units built from 2010 to present.**

The Vice-Chair asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Alex Laroco made a motion to approve the resolution. Tammy Thompson seconded the motion. After a discussion: A vote being had thereon, the “Ayes and “Nays” were as follows:

“AYES”: Janet Evans, Alex Laroco, Majestic Lane
Cheryl Gainey, Tammy Thompson and Rev. Burgess.

“NAYS”: None

The Chair declared the motion carried and the resolution approved.

RESOLUTION No. 18 of 2022

A Resolution - To extend the Employment Agreement of Caster D. Binion as the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh

WHEREAS, on September 27, 2012, the Board of Commissioners appointed Caster D. Binion as the Interim Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP); and

WHEREAS, On February 28, 2013, the Board of Commissioners appointed Caster D. Binion to the position of the Executive Director of the HACP under the terms of an Employment Agreement which expired on March 31, 2015; and

WHEREAS, On December 18, 2014, the Board of Commissioners extended Caster D. Binion’s Employment Agreement to March 31, 2017; and

WHEREAS, On February 23, 2017, the Board of Commissioners extended Caster D. Binion’s Employment Agreement to March 31, 2019; and

WHEREAS, On April 1, 2019, the Board of Commissioners extended Caster D. Binion’s Employment Agreement to March 31, 2022.

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners has determined it is in the best interest of the HACP to retain Caster D. Binion as the Executive Director and such have decided to extend his Employment Agreement without any amended provisions contained therein.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh:

Section 1. Effective April 1, 2022, the Employment Agreement of Caster D. Binion, Executive Director of the HACP, is extended for three (3) years through March 31, 2025, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Employment Agreement; and

Section 2. The Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the HACP is authorized to execute the Employment Agreement on behalf of the Authority.

Vice-Chair, Evans asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Alex Laroco made a motion to approve the resolution. Rev. Burgess seconded the motion. After a discussion:
A vote being had thereon, the “Ayes and “Nays” were as follows:

“AYES”:
Janet Evans, Alex Laroco, Cheryl Gainey
Majestic Lane and Rev. Burgess.

“NAYS”:
Tammy Thompson.

The Chair declared the motion carried and the resolution approved.

Mr. Evans: Caster Binion has been an excellent Executive Director. He has improved the HA as it is now. I’m proud of him. He has worked well with all of the Commissioners and Staff.

Ms. Gainey, Tenant Council President – Allegheny Dwellings: Under Mr. Binion’s leadership he has empowered the community by producing livable and affordable housing for residents. Mr. Binion’s efforts to produce livable mixed income communities with the Choice Neighborhood Initiative Grants such as Skyline, Larimer, Sand stone Quarry, Fineview and Allegheny Dwellings Neighborhoods has made a positive impact on the lives of residents. Mr. Binion has always had an open door policy that allowed residents to express their concerns to him directly. He has been a real asset to the City of Pittsburgh and I want to thank him for all that he has done.
Thank you.

Tammy Thompson: I would like to go on record that I am opposed to this resolution.

End of Resolution portion of the meeting.

EXECUTIVE REPORT: Mr. Binion addressed the Board and reminded them that they have received the Operations, Finance and Executive Reports.

Mr. Binion said: - at this time I would like to thank all of the past board members and current board members that I have worked with over the years. I would like to thank the residents that have provided positive comments and discussions on how we can improve the HACP. I would like to take my hat off to my staff, which make their jobs look easy, but it is very hard and they work very hard. We have achieved lots of things over the years and have received national recognition and we have improved the affordable housing in the City of Pittsburgh. Our core mission is self-sufficiency. We have increased innovative programs by giving people the opportunity to be self-sufficient so they can find jobs that pay real incomes so they won’t have to work two jobs. We have provided training for folks to move from a minimum wage job to a living wage. We have improved education by working with partners in the community to ensure residents have all types of skilled training and education. We have provided scholarships to the youth in our communities and we have a great internship program where those students can

come and work for the HA. There are lots of programs for residents. We have increased affordable housing with Choice Neighborhoods; we have national recognition for doing things outside the box and we will continue to throw everything at the wall to improve affordable housing in the City of Pittsburgh and as the market in the city is going up, affordable housing is a big issue of the city. The HACP is on the front line to get people affordable housing in the City with our home ownership program.

NEW BUSINESS: There was no new business.

AJOURNMENT: The Vice-Chair asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting Cheryl Gainey made a motion to adjourn and Alex Laroco seconded the motion.

A vote being had thereon, the “Ayes and “Nays” were as follows:

“AYES”: Janet Evans, Majestic Lane, Cheryl Gainey,
Rev. Burgess and Alex Laroco.

“NAYS”: None

Ms. Evans declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned.

Recording Secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy L. Shaffer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.