

MINUTES FOR THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND
HOUSING ADVISORY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Farr at 3:40 PM.

2. Roll Call

All Commissioners were present except Commissioner Thorp; Commissioners Farr and Smith and Council Liaison Choi were present via conference call. Also present were Tia Ingram, Tony Taplin and Yvette Woods from the Richmond Housing Authority.

3. Agenda Review and Adoption

The agenda was adopted.

4. New Business

Item 4 A.RHA sustainability: Consultant Tia Ingram gave a brief report on the sustainability of the Richmond Housing Authority: a) Mayor Butt has proposed a resolution to dissolve the Richmond Housing Authority. Consultant Ingram has some concerns about this. The first is what will be in the impact on the public housing residents and Section 8 participants, and the second is ~~what~~ the impact on the staff. She thinks the residents will probably be OK because their assistance will be administered by the new entity. The RHA employees are City of Richmond employees assigned to positions at RHA. The city would have to create some kind of flex placement arrangement Chair Farr asked if the employees could be transferred to the Housing Authority of Contra Costa County (HACCC). Consultant Ingram replied not likely given that HACCC already has staff so some positions would not be needed. For employees that might be hired by HACCC, the salaries are different and that might result in a pay cut. b) The process by which the RHA moves forward can be either by 1) voluntarily agreeing to transfer to another agency (HACCC). (In this case HACCC would have to agree to take over the RHA), or, 2) HUD can declare the RHA in default and take it over. RHA has been addressing the issues HUD has noted and is making improvements, this option may not happen.

Consultant Ingram noted that Mayor Butt's resolution (item F-1 on the Special Meeting of the Housing Commission for September 19, 2017) will be presented without any staff reports or any plan for what to do with the RHA if it is dissolved. She said that there are three options: 1. The RHA remains with the City of Richmond. 2. The RHA separates from the city and becomes a single, stand-alone entity. 3. The RHA merges with HACCC. She will present an analysis of the three options at a study session at the next city council meeting on September 26, 2017. Consultant Ingram stated that she cannot share the agenda reports for the items with the HAC because the city has not released them yet and some were still being drafted.

Commissioner Weekes asked why Mayor Butt wants to dissolve the RHA. Consultant Ingram suggested that perhaps he is frustrated with the number of complaints HUD has made about RHA, failed projects and poor delivery by staff. Councilman Choi said that it's likely that there will not be any action taken on Mayor Butt's resolution at the council meeting today (9/19), the council will need to analyze the options. He said the Mayor Butt doesn't know what to do, he wants to hear more from the city manager regarding options and feasibility of the three possible plans. The meeting tonight will be to flush out what the problems are, and what steps or options are possible.

4.B. Consultant Ingram said that the RHA staff housed in civic center plaza will be relocating to 330 24th street; she has already relocated. This will save ~~in~~ \$60,000 in annual rent previously paid to the City of Richmond for office space.

4.C. REAC inspections: HUD hired a company to do annual inspections of RHA public housing. This week they are inspecting Nystrom Village, next week they will inspect Nevin Plaza. All residents were noticed; the inspector will identify a random sample of units to inspect the day of the inspections. Consultant Ingram noted concern because RHA has not performed annual unit inspections in over three years.

5. Review of staff reports for September 26, 2017

5.A. Executive Director status report. Consultant Ingram stated that she has initiated many changes at RHA. Previously, there was inadequate monitoring of staff, and the previous Executive Director was not directly involved in the day-to-day running of the housing authority. Consultant Ingram has initiated staff meetings which occur on a regular basis. She has implemented staff reviews, to assess job performance and compliance with job duties. She has also implemented staff training, including customer service training; attendance by 5 employees has been scheduled. Chair Farr asked about staff compliance. Consultant Ingram stated that she is working to address performance issues including written annual performance evaluations. Consultant Ingram stated that she is starting monthly reports so the Advisory Board and Commission are aware of important developments. The Office of the Inspector General findings have been reduced down to only 4 findings at this time. SEMAP: the report was submitted on time, and RHA self-certified as a 'standard' performer. Labor review: annual compliance review by HUD to ensure contracts were awarded properly, and contractors receive the correct wage, there were a few minor findings, and they are being addressed. The 2017-2018 budget is being re-done based on new information and projections of revenue and expenditures. In partnership with Richmond Works, RHA has selected a new employee for a temporary position; start date within next few weeks. Consultant Ingram mentioned that Tony Taplin, RHA Finance Manager is retiring the end of the month, this will create a huge void. Not associated with the retirement, RHA will be doing a forensic financial audit to establish a baseline for RHA financials. Consultant Ingram will be using industry resources to help keep staff updated on HUD rules. RHA is currently only utilizing 84 % of our allotted Section 8 vouchers, 1554 out of 1851 possible. There are two problems with under-utilizing vouchers, families aren't being served, and the RHA is not getting paid for the units that aren't being rented. RHA will open the Section 8 tenant-based and project-based waiting lists on October 16, 2017. RHA is currently doing outreach to landlords, including sending mailings with

information. Consultant Ingram has been working on client communications. She started three newsletters: a newsletter for residents of public housing, another for households with Section 8 assistance, and a third newsletter for landlords. Consultant Ingram brought up the Hacienda public housing site. There has been a lot of vandalism and squatting at the site. It is estimated that it will cost \$563,000 per year to secure and protect the property. RHA paid for a company to install and maintain steel cages on access points (first, and some second floor) doors and windows that deter entry. Effective October 1st There is a new contract with a security company for 2 guards to monitor the site 24 hours a day 7 days a week. There will be lights and porta-potties installed at the site. Chair Farr asked if there are plans to do something with the Hacienda building. Consultant Ingram replied that RHA is currently in negotiations with Mercy Housing, the development partner. A critical first step is identifying funds for the rehabilitation, including Low Income Tax Credits. The staff estimates completion of construction, and initial leasing in late 2019, or early 2020. The problem is the approximately \$500,000 a year it will cost the RHA to secure the property until the units are occupied.

5.B. RHA has terminated the contract with A1 Security company and has a new contract with Allied Security effective October 1, 2017.

5.C. RHA put out a call for residents to volunteer for a Resident Advisory Board. There are 7 positions on the board, and there were 54 people who volunteered. RHA did a random drawing of names and selected 7 people. Their names will go before Housing Commission on September 26.

5.D. Contract to de-trash Hacienda: RHA received two bids to clean up the Hacienda. One was for over \$100,000. The RHA went with the low bid, which was for \$38,000. There is biohazardous waste at the site, which is why the cost is so expensive.

5.E. Extending service contracts: RHA does not have maintenance, carpet installers, elevator repairers, etc., these services are contracted out on yearly service contracts. There is an option for a 1 year renewal of these contracts, however, RHA missed the deadline to renew these contracts. These service contracts may have to be put out to bid again.

5.F. Award of project-based vouchers. RHA has awarded approximately 200 project-based vouchers to developments that provide affordable rental units, however, staff did not follow proper HUD protocols. Consultant Ingram is working to correct the deficiencies, and to obtain any necessary waiver to allow award of PBV to three current developments.

There were some comments about the city council meeting scheduled for September 19, 2017 and Mayor Butt's resolution to dissolve the RHA. Councilmember Choi said that the RHA is not the kind of services we want to defer. We can't wash our hands of the RHA, for the good of our residents we need to hold on to it. Consultant Ingram replied that we need to keep the RHA accountable. The only way for the City Council/Board to provide good governance is to know what's going on. That is why she is committed to providing a written monthly report. If the city is willing to make tough decisions about current operations, commit resources and hold staff accountable, the RHA has an opportunity to properly administer the program. Otherwise, the city should let the RHA go to HACCC. Consultant Ingram also said that moving forward the RHA is committed to

providing information and holding staff accountable. The staff is stepping up and making a team effort.

5. Next Meeting

This Commission meets every 2nd Monday at 3:30 p.m. at 2400 Nevin Avenue in the Community Room. This meeting is being held in a wheelchair accessible location. To request disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact Bruce Soublet, ADA Coordinator, at (510) 620-6509 at least three business days before the meeting date. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 16, 2017. (Oct 9th is a holiday)

6. Adjournment. Chair Farr adjourned the meeting at 4:40 PM.