



*Connecting people to homes, hope and opportunity. Jennifer Westerman, CEO*

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**  
**Monday, February 27, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.**  
**In Person and Zoom**

**PRESENT:**

Chair Marchelle Knapp  
Vice Chair Traci Wood  
Commissioner Allan Rudberg  
Commissioner David Vasquez  
Commissioner Dixie Kolditz  
Secretary Jennifer Westerman

**ABSENT:**

Commissioner Sue Lantz

**STAFF:**

Katie Bonus, Director of Operations  
Cecilia Larson, Rent Assistance Program Manager  
Rachelle Sanders, VIP Manager  
Sarah Kaczmarek, Interim Controller for Finance Dept  
Cynthia Mitchell, Executive Assistant/HR

**PUBLIC:**

MaryAlice Wallis, Mayor for City of Longview  
Cameron Kockritz, Regional Representative for Congresswoman Gluesenkamp Perez for Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

- a) Chair Knapp called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

**2. CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO AGENDA, IF ANY: None**

**3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION:**

- a) Ms. Kockritz introduced herself to the board. She is the Regional Representative for Congresswoman Gluesenkamp Perez for Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.

**4. FINANCIAL REPORTS:**

- a) Ms. Kaczmarek provided financial reports for January 2023 for HOSWWA and Lilac Place, as provided in the Board Packet.



Ms. Kaczmarek reported that the Lilac Place tree removal mentioned in the Maintenance and Operations budget was actually a tree trimming.

## 5. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a) *Commissioner Vasquez made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Vice Chair Wood seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.*

## 6. STAFF REPORTS

- a) **Voucher Status:** Ms. Larson gave the Voucher Status Report as provided in the Board packet.

Vice Chair Wood asked for clarification on what NED stands for. Ms. Larson responded that NED stands for Non-Elderly Disabled. Vice Chair Wood asked for clarification on if the seniors were able to apply for the NED vouchers. Ms. Larson clarified that seniors have been applying to the Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV). Vice Chair Wood asked what portion of people needing housing in Cowlitz County are seniors. Secretary Westerman responded that 75% were single person households. Ms. Bonus added that 85% of who we serve are either elderly or disabled.

Chair Knapp reported a success story from her work at Campus Towers. One of her clients was invited to apply for a voucher and was incredibly thankful for HOSWWA staff. Chair Knapp was also very impressed with the HOSWWA Yardi portal. Vice Chair Wood asked if Yardi was being beneficial. She had noted the decrease in payroll costs and was wondering if Yardi was part of that. Secretary Westerman responded that payroll costs are underbudget due to budgeted wage increases that will go to staff during their annual reviews. She added that Yardi has been proving to be beneficial. Ms. Larson reported that she and her team are always learning how better to utilize Yardi.

- b) **Property Summaries:** Ms. Bonus gave an update on the Property Reports as provided in the Board Packet.

Chair Knapp inquired as to if we ever email the response letters that we send out. Ms. Bonus responded that to her knowledge, currently we just send physical letters, but that with Yardi we might be able to email them as well. Chair Knapp added that when working with a homeless population, an email might reach them better than a letter.

- c) **VIP Summaries:** Ms. Sanders gave an update on the Veteran Integration Program (VIP) as provided in the Board Packet.



## 7. CHAIR AND SECRETARY REPORTS

- a) **Chair Report:** None.
- b) **Secretary Report:** Secretary Westerman gave her report as included in the Board packet.

Chair Knapp asked if we would be partnering with someone else on the Homeownership piece of the Ocean Beach property. Secretary Westerman confirmed that we would partner with someone, they would build it and then we would sell the homes.

## 8. NEW BUSINESS:

- a) Board Action: Grant Acceptance for Sunrise Village and VIP

Secretary Westerman reported on the grants that are up for acceptance. The VIP grant allows Ms. Sanders to look into Foundational Community Supports. If we move forward with that program, we will return to the board with a proposal. This program would help provide Supportive Services for non-veterans. The Sunrise Village grants were awarded for the development of Sunrise Village.

*Commissioner Rudberg made a motion to accept the grant awards. Commissioner Kolditz seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.*

- b) Board Action: Increase to Purchasing Limits

Secretary Westerman reported on the increase to purchasing limits for specific staff.

*Commissioner Rudberg made a motion to increase the purchasing limits. Vice Chair Wood seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.*

- c) Board Action: Gift and Gift in Kind Policy

Secretary Westerman reported on the Gift and Gift in Kind Policy. The city has enabled the powers granted by RCW to allow us to accept gifts. Secretary Westerman proposed removing the policy on allowing cryptocurrency.

Commissioner Kolditz asked why we would remove the cryptocurrency from the policy. Secretary Westerman responded that the attorney recommended that we not accept it due to the management of cryptocurrency being too extensive for our agency. We can leave it in if we choose, as it already is recommended that we go to legal counsel if considering accepting cryptocurrency. Vice Chair Wood asked how we were able to accept the property from the church for Sunrise



Village if it was prior to us having a gift policy. Secretary Westerman responded that we haven't accepted it yet, and furthermore, we will be receiving it under a very low purchase and sale agreement. Chair Knapp asked Commissioner Kolditz if she was comfortable with excluding the cryptocurrency. Commissioner Kolditz responded that she was comfortable excluding it, but that it could make sense to keep it in there for the future in case cryptocurrencies become easier to handle so that we don't have to re-add it to the policy later. Vice Chair Wood added that we are allowed to decline a gift if we are unable to manage it.

*Commissioner Rudberg made a motion to accept the modified gift and gift in kind policy, eliminating the cryptocurrency. Commissioner Vasquez seconded the motion. Further discussion: Vice Chair Wood feels it would be better to leave cryptocurrency in the policy and not modify it as we can always decline an offer if needed. 2 votes for, 3 votes against. Motion failed.*

*Vice Chair Wood made a motion to accept the gift and gift in kind policy as written. Commissioner Kolditz seconded the motion. 3 votes for, 2 votes against. Motion passed.*

d) Board Action: Expense Allowance Policy Update

Secretary Westerman reported on the Expense Allowance Policy Update. The update applies a methodology to the existing Expense Policy to determine how much money each manager is allocated. It also allows managers the option to refuse the allowance.

Vice Chair Wood asked why employees are not able to turn in receipts for reimbursement rather than adding taxable income to their paychecks. Secretary Westerman responded that as a public agency, we are not permitted to spend public funds on food and such. By sending the money through paychecks, it's compensation for the employee and no longer considered public funds. Secretary Westerman clarified that snacks on the back counter are the only exception as they are part of board functions. Vice Chair Wood asked if managers would be receiving this extra pay monthly no matter whether they use it for expenses or not. If that is the case, then what methods are there for accountability that they are improving morale with these funds? Secretary Westerman responded that she is not proposing doing accountability on these funds. She is taking an existing policy and adding a methodology in order to use the existing policy. Secretary Westerman added that managers spend a lot of money already for things such as employee awards, food, and retirement awards, to the point that she needs to tell them to not spend as much. This policy is both recognition of their generosity and acknowledgement that morale building activities need to happen.

*Commissioner Vasquez made a motion to accept the expense allowance policy*



*update. Commissioner Kolditz seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.*

e) Board Action: Staffing Update

Secretary Westerman reported on the staffing update. She is requesting that the board approve an increase to staff.

Chair Knapp commented that she feels we are approaching our limit on what opportunities we are able to take advantage of, and that the increased staff will help us continue to take advantage of further opportunities.

*Commissioner Rudberg made a motion to accept the addition of three staffing positions. Commissioner Kolditz seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.*

f) Board Discussion: By-Laws

Secretary Westerman reported on a piece of the bylaws that limits how many years a commissioner may serve as Chair. If we keep the limit to no more than three, year-long terms as currently in the by-laws, we will need someone to step up in April as the new Chair. Alternatively, we can modify the by-laws to remove this limit. Commissioners indicated that they were interested in modifying the by-laws. A modification will be brought to the board at the next meeting.

**9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

a) FYE 2022 Strategic Plan Update

Secretary Westerman requested that discussion of the Strategic Plan be tabled until the next meeting.

*Vice Chair Wood made a motion to table discussion of the Strategic Plan. Commissioner Rudberg seconded. Passed unanimously.*

**10. EXECUTIVE SESSION, IF ANY: None**

**11. ADJOURNMENT:**

- a) The next regular meeting will be Monday, March 27, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.
- b) Chair Knapp adjourned the meeting at 5:19 p.m.



**Board Approval of Minutes:**



---

**Marchelle Knapp, Chairperson**

3/27/23

---

**Date**



---

**Attest: Jennifer Westerman, Secretary**

3/27/23

---

**Date**

