

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

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EMERGENCY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

+ + + + +

FRIDAY,
SEPTEMBER 7, 2018

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The Board of Commissioners met in the Boardroom, 1175 North Capitol Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., at 2:00 p.m., Neil Albert, Chairman, presiding.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

- NEIL ALBERT, Chairman
- WILLIAM SLOVER, Vice Chairman
- KENNETH COUNCIL, Commissioner
- BRIAN KENNER, Commissioner*
- NAKEISHA NEAL JONES, Commissioner
- JOSE ORTIZ GAUD, Commissioner
- FRANSELENE ST. JEAN, Commissioner
- AQUARIUS VANN-GHASRI, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT:

- TYRONE GARRETT, Executive Director
- ALETHEA McNAIR, Manager of Board Relations

COMMISSIONER(S) ABSENT:

- KEN GROSSINGER, Commissioner
- FRANK LANCASTER, Commissioner

*present via teleconference

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(2:16 p.m.)

CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Neil Albert. I'm Chair of the Board of Commissioners of the D.C. Housing Authority.

I'm calling this meeting to order. This is an emergency board meeting being held today, September 7th, at our headquarters, 1133 North Capitol Street, Northeast.

As I remind you every board meeting, please silence your phones and other electronic devices.

And at this time, as is our custom, we are going to observe a minute of silence.

(Moment of silence observed.)

CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Thank you. I'm just going to remind you, particularly if you are new to our board meetings, that we do have some standards of public decorum that we encourage you to follow while you're here. And if you don't follow them, we will ask you to leave. That has

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1 never happened, but I'm sure it wouldn't happen
2 today either.

3 Again, as is our custom, on every agenda
4 we give the public two opportunities to comment.
5 One is to -- the first opportunity is to comment
6 on the resolutions being discussed, and then the
7 second opportunity is to bring general comments,
8 concerns, and sometimes compliments.

9 So, at this time, we are going to open
10 up to our folks who signed up for public comments.
11 But before we do that, I want to establish that we
12 do have a quorum for a meeting.

13 MS. McNAIR: Thank you. Commissioner
14 St. Jean?

15 COMMISSIONER ST. JEAN: Present.

16 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner
17 Vann-Ghasri?

18 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Here.

19 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Council?

20 COMMISSIONER COUNCIL: Present.

21 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Grossinger?

22 (No response.)

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1 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Kenner?

2 COMMISSIONER KENNER: Here.

3 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Lancaster?

4 (No response.)

5 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Neal Jones?

6 (No response.)

7 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Ortiz Gaud?

8 COMMISSIONER ORTIZ GAUD: Here.

9 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Slover?

10 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: We=ve got his
11 belongings here. He was just in the room.

12 MS. McNAIR: Okay. I=ll circle that.
13 Chairman Albert?

14 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Here.

15 MS. McNAIR: You have six Commissioners
16 present. You have a quorum.

17 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Thank you. So we
18 have two people signed up. Nicole Odom. Is
19 Nicole here? I don=t see Nicole in the room.
20 Okay. Why don=t you come forward. Nicole, you
21 can come up to us, so you guys can be together. I
22 think Daniel is going to be a gentleman and allow

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1 you to go first.

2 MS. ODOM: Good afternoon.

3 ALL: Good afternoon.

4 MS. ODOM: My name is Nicole Odom. I
5 live in Barry Farm, and I am with Empower DC.

6 I'm sorry. I just ran here, the steps.

7 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Okay.

8 MS. ODOM: So I'm here because --
9 first, let me say the process for relocation has
10 been kind of just lost for me. I have little --
11 I had little communication with HOU, and this was
12 starting in the summer or maybe just before the
13 summer 2017. I filled out all their paperwork, and
14 they gave me a stack, a binder of all of the public
15 housing properties, because I chose that as my
16 first option and a voucher as my second.

17 So that was in 2017. I knew nothing of
18 any other properties. It was just kind of like,
19 what am I choosing?

20 So fast-forward to the information
21 session for the voucher, that was probably the most
22 valuable thing for me going through this whole

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1 relocation process, because it gave me the
2 information that I needed a long time ago to make
3 a really smart decision with, you know, how I wanted
4 to move forward with my housing for my family.

5 You know, there=s a lot of myths and
6 things that go -- are being said, you know, about
7 the voucher. And if you don=t really know, you=re
8 kind of -- it=s kind of believable. So when I got
9 the information, I felt more empowered to make the
10 decision that I wanted a voucher. But still, at
11 the same time, I=m not the head of household, so
12 I had to, you know, go back, tell that information
13 to my husband, so that, you know, we can make a smart
14 decision. And we were only given two days to do
15 that.

16 And I haven=t even gotten my offers for
17 public housing, which I had some hopes for some
18 places, and I didn=t get that until like the
19 beginning of August.

20 And so I was told that I didn=t have the
21 opportunity any longer to get a voucher, and that
22 I had to take either of the options that were given

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1 to me or offered to me for public housing, which
2 was Woodland or Richardson Dwellings. No.

3 You know, just recently, yesterday, a
4 girl got shot in Woodland on the same street, same
5 block, that I was offered, and then there was a
6 10-year-old that got killed in the other location
7 not that long ago. And so that=s not something
8 that I would ever consider.

9 You know, it=s nothing against the
10 people, but it=s just -- it=s not a better quality
11 of life. You know, if I have to move out of my
12 community, I would like it to be somewhere where
13 I can just kind of take a breath for a second.

14 The voucher program, the vouchers that
15 are being offered, you know, should be extended.
16 It should be given to Barry Farm residents if they
17 want it, and I feel like if we had known about the
18 vouchers and the information a long time ago, a lot
19 of us probably would have been in a place by now,
20 quite honestly. I know I would have.

21 So I just wanted to let you all know
22 that. I=m working with people right now,

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1 actually, with the voucher. And I=m grateful for
2 them, but I feel like this could have been handled
3 a lot better if we -- if we had known the correct
4 information.

5 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Thanks so much for
6 your feedback.

7 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: I would
8 like to ask a question.

9 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Sure.

10 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Probably
11 Daniel is the best person for me to ask this
12 question to, because Daniel has been in Barry Farm
13 from the beginning like I.

14 So, Daniel, are you confused like I=m
15 confused? Because we had many conversations in
16 the very beginning, and it -- and we both agreed
17 that in Barry Farm that federal vouchers would be
18 the way we would want to go versus local vouchers.

19 And as long as I=ve been on this board,
20 I have always been told -- and I should be on record
21 -- we have always said federal voucher, federal
22 voucher. Even when Commissioner -- at that time,

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1 Commissioner Angie Rodgers was on this board.
2 Angie Rodgers should be able to say the same.

3 So now I'm confused when I heard Nicole
4 says it appears as though only recently she knew
5 about the voucher when I would be under the
6 impression during Michael Kelly and Adrienne
7 Todman that that offer was still there.

8 So what I'm hearing now is like no.

9 MR. DEL PIELAGO: Well, I -- I think --
10 and just for the record, Daniel Del Pielago with
11 Empower DC. I think it's not that folks didn't
12 know about the vouchers; folks didn't know about
13 this expiration date that came up on them very
14 quickly at the -- we found out about it, if I'm not
15 mistaken, at the roundtable that Councilmember
16 Anita Bonds held where Director Garrett talked
17 about it.

18 So it wasn't necessarily that folks
19 didn't know that it was an option for them, but that
20 there was some sort of expiration date, and that
21 expiration date was like a very quick turnaround
22 for them. So folks were like, wait a sec, like what

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1 the heck am I going to do?

2 So, yeah, I think that=s -- that=s the
3 issue. It=s not the not knowing about the
4 vouchers, but not knowing about this expiration
5 date that came up very quickly on them. And, you
6 know, it -- as you all well know, using your voucher
7 is not an easy task, so that was the other concern
8 for a lot of folks.

9 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: And I just want to be
10 clear that what I heard from Nicole is not that she
11 didn=t hear about the vouchers, but the deadline
12 is the issue. And, you know, given the many things
13 that people who have families have to do, I can see
14 how a deadline could come up on you suddenly.

15 MS. ODOM: And can I add that --

16 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Yes.

17 MS. ODOM: -- my point with that is that
18 I wasn=t reached out to in a timely manner.

19 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Yes.

20 MS. ODOM: You know, like I said, I had
21 entered their office on my own, 2017, you know,
22 early summer. And so there was no offers, there

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1 were no -- there was really no communication. So
2 I'm thinking, okay, well, maybe they're working
3 with people in stages, you know, working over from
4 Sumner. Okay, fine. Because I haven't heard
5 anything.

6 And so now I'm getting these offers and
7 I'm like, well, you're giving me these public
8 housing offers after the expiration date of the
9 vouchers, and I'm not given that option now of now
10 moving to my second option, which is the voucher,
11 which I just learned about.

12 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: But you're saying
13 that you're working with staff here.

14 MS. ODOM: I'm trying to. I'm trying
15 to, and I'm hoping and praying that it works out.

16 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Yeah. Commissioner
17 St. Jean, and then --

18 COMMISSIONER ST. JEAN: Hi. I'm
19 Commissioner St. Jean, an ACVP participant
20 commissioner. So who are you working with in here
21 today at DCHA?

22 MS. ODOM: I was actually just speaking

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1 with Ms. Jefferson.

2 COMMISSIONER ST. JEAN: Ms. Jefferson?
3 And did they show you any houses?

4 MS. ODOM: Well, see, she had reached
5 out to me maybe two weeks ago or so and had told
6 me, yeah, there=s a house that you can go and look
7 at. I was kind of shocked because this was the
8 first time anybody had actually reached out to me.

9 So I was like, AI have a voucher?@ And
10 so I went to look at the house, met the landlord,
11 very nice lady. We had an hour-long conversation.
12 She really liked me; I really liked her. But then
13 I was confused, so I asked, you know, Ms. Jefferson,
14 ASo do I have a voucher or not?@

15 She checked. She found out the next
16 day that I actually didn=t, and so that made me just
17 -- my emotions have been like a rollercoaster. I
18 can=t sleep. It=s really -- the stress is too
19 much. And so now here I am in a place of just now
20 -- I don=t have a voucher, this house and my visit
21 really meant nothing, and now I=m back to now the
22 communication with somebody else, which is Ms.

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1 Jeter, and she tells me that I don=t have a voucher
2 and that I have no chance at a voucher now because
3 of the deadline on the 15th, and that I have to pick
4 one of those public housing options.

5 COMMISSIONER ST. JEAN: So we had an
6 open meeting. I remember you because I was here
7 at the meeting, and we had an interim. A lot of
8 folks came in. It was doing intakes. So --

9 MS. ODOM: Yeah. You told me that,
10 yeah.

11 COMMISSIONER ST. JEAN: Yeah. So you
12 were there, you did the intake, you did all of the
13 video. So what happened during that time?

14 MS. ODOM: I filled out a paper that
15 said, you know, what -- how I wanted my options to
16 be. I chose public housing as my first one,
17 because like I said, I am not a head of household.
18 And as my husband knew it, it was public housing
19 first, and then voucher second.

20 We did not get an offer of what public
21 housing units were available, so we still had our
22 hopes on what we could have -- you know, what we

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1 would be -- you know, what we had our heart set on.
2 That wasn't the case at all.

3 And so voucher being the second option,
4 and after learning, you know, all the information
5 I did on the 12th, you know, I was actually pushing
6 more for that. There is wonderful programs within
7 that -- homeownership. I plan to go to school and
8 become an RN, him a teacher.

9 COMMISSIONER ST. JEAN: Congrats.

10 MS. ODOM: That would be amazing, to
11 have that opportunity. But I was shot down by
12 saying -- by being told that that wasn't an option
13 anymore.

14 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: So, Nicole, so I --
15 I was just talking to the Executive Director.
16 We'll have this resolved by the end of next week.

17 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: And this
18 should be with all of -- all of Barry Farm residents
19 that may fit into this category, because apparently
20 there is some discrepancy. And I'm looking at it
21 as an agency with communication, because I'm going
22 to say, again, I was always under the impression

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1 that in the beginning, from day one, that all the
2 residents actually is educated and really
3 understood, only to find out here only recently
4 through how many directors that a resident is
5 actually understanding and realizing, that=s
6 scary.

7 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: It happens. So let
8 me just turn it over to Commissioner Slover.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Well, if you=ve
10 solved the problem, that=s great. But let=s try
11 to figure out how we got to this problem. So we
12 have a certain number of residents left at Barry
13 Farm, and clearly this may not be the only instance
14 of this issue.

15 And so I guess I would ask -- you know,
16 Barry Farms is a very complicated thing, as we know.
17 But maybe it makes sense to just make sure we reach
18 out to everybody who is actually left on the
19 property, and just try to figure out a strategy,
20 given all of the stuff that is going on around all
21 of these other issues, I think it=s just really
22 important to work with Empower DC, or whomever, and

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1 just get all the stuff, so people don=t have to come
2 down and have these discussions and say, AI=ve
3 talked to this person and that person.@

4 Let=s all get in a room together with
5 the folks left and make sure they are either getting
6 into a traditional public housing unit or into a
7 voucher, and not worry about their expiration dates
8 or any of these other things. And assuming we can
9 do all of that -- I hope we can -- let=s just do
10 it so we don=t have another meeting like this in
11 September.

12 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Yes. I agree with
13 you.

14 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: I agree.

15 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Nicole, thank you so
16 much for your time and your patience.

17 Daniel?

18 MR. DEL PIELAGO: So, once again,
19 Daniel Del Pielago with Empower DC. You know,
20 when we saw this resolution, we couldn=t help but
21 think that it was -- you know, had a lot to do with
22 Barry Farm, maybe not specifically with Barry Farm,

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1 but a lot to do with Barry Farm, especially given
2 the health threats that many residents are under
3 with the finding of lead and just the general
4 conditions that the property is in now, as well as
5 the properties that residents are being -- the
6 public housing properties that residents are being
7 offered.

8 So we have been working with some legal
9 help to help us understand what Acomparable@ means
10 as far as relocation. And Acomparable@ is not just
11 if you live in a two-bedroom apartment that you are
12 going to get another two-bedroom apartment
13 somewhere else. Acomparable@ means that you
14 enjoy, as much as possible, the same quality of life
15 that you do where you currently live.

16 And just in Nicole=s case this morning,
17 we were looking at crime rates from Barry Farm as
18 compared to the two places -- you know, Woodland
19 Terrace being one where the crime rate is triple,
20 if not quadruple, what currently exists at Barry
21 Farm.

22 So I would urge us to be mindful that,

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1 you know, Acomparable@ needs to mean that, that
2 people are not moving from, you know, what=s the
3 saying, from the frying pan into the fire, or
4 however you say that. I do think this would help,
5 but the other thing that is happening is that we
6 are still very unclear about what is happening at
7 Barry Farm.

8 I know they -- I just saw that there are
9 meetings planned for next week with the New
10 Communities Initiative, but that=s where the whole
11 -- it seems to be for the Barry Farm residents it=s
12 a resident-only meeting. I don=t know how legal
13 that is, and we have been looking into that because
14 these are government meetings. I don=t know why
15 only a certain subset of the community is able to
16 attend these meetings.

17 But -- and I don=t know how you guys --
18 you know, how closely you work with your partners.
19 Angie Rodgers, the Director of New Communities, has
20 publicly said in The Washington Business Journal
21 that she would meet with the Barry Farm Tenants and
22 Allies Association, which is different than Barry

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1 Farm residents. It=s the same but different.

2 We reached out to her. A Barry Farm
3 resident reached out to her asking when we could
4 meet. She said, AWe=re not ready.@ And now we=re
5 seeing that these meetings are happening. So it=s
6 this type of distrust that you and your partners
7 build with residents that put people in a very tough
8 situation. So people are not availing themselves
9 of what is happening, especially when you have HOU
10 that is -- you know, will plop down, fill this
11 application out, and here are some properties, with
12 no real help for residents to understand what is
13 really happening.

14 So while -- while I think this is a move
15 in a right direction, I don=t know you all are going
16 to do this because there are many other properties
17 that are going to be undergoing the very same
18 conditions.

19 And just for the Commissioners here,
20 the other Commissioner, you know, Acomparable@ is
21 not just AWe are moving you to another two-bedroom
22 apartment.@ AComparable@ has to be -- maintain

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1 the same quality of life that you currently enjoy
2 where you live.

3 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Thank you, and
4 thanks for taking time this afternoon to come and
5 share your comments with us.

6 As on our agenda, it states that there
7 are three resolutions, resolution 18-19, 21, and
8 22. I'm going to ask our Executive Director to
9 provide comments on all three, and then we will vote
10 on them individually.

11 MR. GARRETT: Okay. Thank you, Mr.
12 Chairman.

13 Good afternoon, everyone. These three
14 resolutions are directly a result of our
15 environmental health and safety inspections, which
16 we are doing for our whole entire portfolio across
17 the board where we are going into each and every
18 individual unit, focusing on peeling paint, water
19 damage, mold, mildew, air quality, and pest
20 infestations, and any other fire -- any other
21 hazards that may be in that particular unit.

22 In conjunction with this particular

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1 effort, we are also doing our lead assessments for
2 every single complex in our portfolio. Just as we
3 are going into each individual unit, we are going
4 into -- going to each complex to deal with a lead
5 assessment.

6 These three resolutions directly are
7 impacted by them -- 18 -- 18-19, 18-21, and 18-22.
8 The reality is that we need to be able to relocate
9 residents in some form or fashion, and that=s why
10 we=re asking us to reduce the AYBL designation for
11 Elvans Road where there are larger units there that
12 would allow us the opportunity -- where there is
13 a family that is in a situation where there is a
14 necessary emergency move, we can move that
15 individual/family there to that particular
16 property.

17 18-21 allows us to continue our
18 mission. Our mission is to complete these risk
19 assessments and these environmental inspections as
20 quickly as possible, so we can make assessments and
21 create a strategy to abate or provide interim
22 controls and create a solution to work orders that

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1 we=re actually generating.

2 18-22, which is the resolution which
3 talks about the designation of remaining --
4 remaining federal vouchers, which we had
5 previously designated -- the board had previously
6 designated for local -- local referral programs --
7 272 of those vouchers -- we would like those
8 designated for use by the Authority to move and
9 relocate residents when necessary.

10 And, remember, in that resolution, it
11 clearly identifies what those criteria -- what that
12 criteria actually is to move a resident. We=re not
13 just going to do it because we thought this one
14 resident needed to transfer to another property for
15 some unknown reason. There is going to be a direct
16 correlation to what we=re doing with our
17 environmental safety inspections and the -- and
18 risk assessments.

19 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: All right. So any
20 questions from our Commissioners for our Executive
21 Director?

22 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Yes. This

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1 is 18-19. So once -- if we pass this resolution,
2 is that to say that there will be no more achieving
3 your best life communities? Because I believe
4 Columbia Road was AYBL, now is RAD; Elvans Road,
5 of course, I think it was our first one.

6 So now if we do this with these five
7 units, and how will the selection be? Because it=s
8 two groups of people that would have that
9 opportunity. Of course, I am going to -- my
10 interest would be the public housing transfer
11 individuals, because since being on this board I
12 have had problems with the waiting list versus
13 overcrowded units.

14 And as we know, overcrowded units can
15 also create health problems. So that=s one issue.
16 How are you going to -- how are you going to make
17 a decision who gets the five?

18 And to answer the question, once we pass
19 this resolution, there is -- to say there are and
20 will not be any more AYBL -- Achieving Your Best
21 Life model -- communities.

22 MR. GARRETT: No. I think what we are

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1 doing, Commissioner Vann-Ghasri, is we are looking
2 at the AYBL program overall, being able to offer
3 it across -- throughout the portfolio versus a
4 designated site. I think that=s what we have done
5 in the past, where we designated Elvans Road as
6 being that location where all homeownership
7 residents or potential homeowner residents would
8 live.

9 We are looking at, if you want an MTW
10 plan and saying that that probably needs to be
11 revised. So we would still continue a
12 homeownership program in the same vein of AYBL; it
13 just wouldn=t be at a designated site.

14 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Okay.
15 With that said, is there going to be an MOU written,
16 like ASAP, instead of just being on the minutes and
17 in the record? Because as I know, when we -- once
18 we pass this resolution, there will not be any more
19 Achieving Your Best Life at this present time.
20 There has not been identified what communities the
21 other individuals will have this opportunity
22 within the year 2018.

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1 MR. GARRETT: What we=re trying to do,
2 Commissioner Vann-Ghasri, again, is we are going
3 to open it up to the portfolio wide. There won=t
4 be a designated community. It will be for everyone
5 to be able to partake in the AYBL program.

6 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: So when are
7 we going to --

8 MR. GARRETT: We=re going to make the
9 modification to the Moving to Work plan, where it
10 identifies AYBL, and we=ll bring that to the -- back
11 to the board.

12 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: And we were
13 going to do that modification plan in 2018.

14 MR. GARRETT: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Do you know
16 what date? What month?

17 MR. GARRETT: No, ma=am. Not at this
18 point in time. It will be before the end of the
19 year.

20 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Can we go
21 on the record in the minutes and say that it will
22 be done in 2018?

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1 MR. GARRETT: Yes, ma'am.

2 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Thank you.

3 MR. GARRETT: 2018, before the end of
4 the year.

5 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Commissioner
6 Slover.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: So, obviously,
8 supportive of getting people into units that are
9 currently not occupied. Obviously, that=s
10 something we want to make sure we do.

11 I did ask for the resolutions from 2011.
12 I was on the board at that time. It=s one of the
13 last things that was done before I cycled off. And
14 I know we were excited about it at the time.

15 I guess my question would be around, why
16 do we think it hasn=t been -- I mean, this would
17 be an indication of it not being potentially
18 successful. If we have five empty units in a
19 portfolio of 9,000 public housing units, we can=t
20 find five people to participate, five families to
21 participate in the program, do you -- and I went
22 through the restrictions, and, I mean, it=s an

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1 important program, it=s hard to get into, there=s
2 a lot of restrictions. Can we think or talk or
3 maybe you guys can get together and look at the
4 program and see if -- is there something we can do
5 to make it more attractive?

6 Because I think it=s a really critical
7 component to public housing is to try to get people
8 into homeownership. And so I view this as a
9 potential failure, that we haven=t been able to get
10 five families to do this. Am I viewing it wrong?

11 MR. GARRETT: I wouldn=t view it as a
12 failure. I think we did go back and we have been
13 discussing it. Even before this environmental
14 initiative, we were talking about how we could
15 modify the program itself to allow for people to
16 participate.

17 In some instances, what I heard was that
18 residents didn=t necessarily want to move to Elvans
19 Road. They wanted to participate in the program,
20 but that=s not where they actually wanted to be.
21 So that was one of -- one factor that could have
22 contributed to residents not moving or these five

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1 units being available.

2 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Well, could you
3 give us sort of a -- maybe go back and look at this?
4 Because I do think it=s a very important thing, and
5 I=d love to figure out a way to make the program
6 more robust and not less robust. And if it=s about
7 restraints or constrictions or things that people
8 don=t like what they see in there, then let=s talk
9 about it as a board and let=s try to get more units
10 occupied through this program and not less.

11 But, of course, let=s go forward and get
12 these units occupied. But let=s really think
13 about a way to make this program -- and if the board
14 wants to discuss it more, great. But I think --
15 I kind of hope we can all agree that this is
16 something we want to make more attractive and try
17 to get more families into.

18 So I appreciate your finding units, so
19 thank you for doing that. And thank you for
20 getting these into use, but let=s not -- as
21 Commissioner Vann-Ghasri said, let=s not forget
22 the program. And I=m not saying you did that, or

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1 were doing that, but let=s really elevate it up to
2 something of importance. So thank you --

3 MR. GARRETT: Yes, sir.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: -- for your
5 efforts, though. Totally agree with you.

6 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: So let me read
7 Resolution 18-19. It is to amend the designation
8 of Elvans Road as a Rewards Property for the
9 Achieving Your Life -- Your Best Life Rewards
10 Program.

11 Is there a motion to support?

12 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Motion.

13 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Is there a second?

14 COMMISSIONER ORTIZ GAUD: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Roll call vote?

16 MS. McNAIR: Thank you. Commissioner
17 Ortiz Gaud?

18 COMMISSIONER ORTIZ GAUD: Yes.

19 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner St. Jean?

20 COMMISSIONER ST. JEAN: Yes.

21 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner

22 Vann-Ghasri?

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1 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Yes.

2 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Slover?

3 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Yes.

4 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Council?

5 COMMISSIONER COUNCIL: Yes.

6 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Kenner?

7 COMMISSIONER KENNER: Yes.

8 MS. McNAIR: Chairman Albert?

9 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Yes.

10 MS. McNAIR: You have seven yes. The
11 resolution is approved.

12 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Okay. Resolution
13 18-21, to authorize modification for an
14 environmental initiatives contract, and I know our
15 Executive Director talked a little bit about that
16 earlier. Is there a motion?

17 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Can I ask one
18 question?

19 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: A question.

20 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Given the
21 undertaking that we are -- given the extent or the
22 size of the undertaking that we are going through,

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1 is this enough? I mean, do you need more money?
2 In other words, let=s make sure that there is no
3 stop in what we=re doing and that we can keep moving
4 forward. And so --

5 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Great question.

6 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: -- maybe it
7 makes sense to add capacity versus less capacity.
8 Maybe we -- I just want to throw that out. I=m
9 sorry I didn=t bring it up earlier. It just dawned
10 on me as I was looking at these numbers and thinking
11 about the extent of what we=re doing.

12 I mean, we need to get this done. So --

13 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: So just some context
14 for folks who don=t know. So this, who haven=t
15 read the resolution, this will authorize us to add
16 an additional \$5.1 million to about 16 contracts
17 that are already in place for some of the
18 environmental work that we=re doing in a number of
19 our properties across the district.

20 And so Commissioner Slover=s good
21 question is, is \$5.1 million enough? Should we be
22 asking for more? Should you be asking for more?

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1 MR. GARRETT: Not at this time. We
2 believe that 5.1 will get us through this first --
3 this particular phase.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Can we add like
5 a 20 percent --

6 MR. GARRETT: Contingency?

7 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: -- over?

8 MR. GARRETT: Okay.

9 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Without coming
10 back to the board, just -- just in case something
11 happens?

12 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: I would support
13 that.

14 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Can you add that
15 in? I mean, I -- unless a Commissioner has an issue
16 with it, we have to do this, we have to spend the
17 money, let=s do it, let=s make sure it=s done. And
18 if -- you know, obviously, come back as soon as you
19 see there may be a need for more, but maybe 20
20 percent of the total, not of the 5.1, of the total
21 8.3, 20 percent more so 1.4, whatever that --

22 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: So you=re saying

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1 some number close to nine point-something, or --

2 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Correct. Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: So who is doing the
4 math?

5 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: It=s about 1.4
6 more.

7 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Yes. So we=re --
8 the Commissioner is suggesting an additional
9 6.5 million rather than one point -- rather than
10 5.1 million. Does that sound like sufficient
11 money for you?

12 MR. GARRETT: Yes. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Great. So we=re
14 going to modify the resolution to make the
15 additional funding number 6.5 million rather than
16 \$1.5 million. Is there a motion?

17 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: I=ll move
18 that Resolution 18-21 to authorize modification
19 for environmental initiative contract to be
20 entered into.

21 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Second? Is there a
22 second?

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Roll call.

3 MS. McNAIR: Thank you. Commissioner
4 St. Jean?

5 COMMISSIONER ST. JEAN: Yes.

6 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner
7 Vann-Ghasri?

8 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Yes.

9 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Slover?

10 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Yes.

11 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Council?

12 COMMISSIONER COUNCIL: Yes.

13 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Kenner?

14 COMMISSIONER KENNER: Yes.

15 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Ortiz Gaud?

16 COMMISSIONER ORTIZ GAUD: Yes.

17 MS. McNAIR: Chairman Albert?

18 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Yes.

19 MS. McNAIR: You have seven yes. The
20 resolution is approved as amended.

21 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Thank you.

22 And then, finally, Resolution 18-22, to

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1 adopt the emergency regulations to amend the HCVP
2 Limited Local Preference Program. I can't
3 remember how in-depth you talked about this.

4 MR. GARRETT: I kind of brushed over
5 this one, unfortunately. I'm sorry, I apologize.
6 As we were -- as I need to discuss with you, remember
7 back in -- well, might not remember, but it was
8 brought to my attention in 2013 there were a
9 designation of -- of federal vouchers that we had
10 that were to be set aside for preferences with our
11 local agencies who had various programs, where
12 there would be DHS or a veterans program for the
13 use of our federal vouchers to assist local
14 agencies with placing individual residents.

15 What we've done is we have seen that
16 those 700 -- 272 vouchers have not been utilized.
17 There are still in our queue, federal vouchers that
18 are still in our queue that were designated for
19 local use through other agency programs.

20 What we're asking for is the board to
21 allow us and to remove that designation for those
22 particular vouchers to allow us to use them to

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1 support our environmental initiative, allowing us
2 to immediately move residents into units through
3 the utilization of this federal voucher.

4 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Great. Comments?
5 Commissioner Slover?

6 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Obviously,
7 supportive of it because we have to do this work.
8 Also, very disappointed I guess that they have been
9 sitting on the shelf for so long, and so I would
10 ask as part of this process -- and, again, this
11 process is uncovering a lot of things, so thank you
12 for going through it.

13 I would like to look through our entire
14 portfolio of vouchers and make sure that there are
15 at least a short -- a plan to have them used within
16 a certain -- a reasonable amount of time. I don=t
17 want to find another situation, or I don=t think
18 this board should want to be in another situation
19 where we have that number of vouchers sitting in
20 dormancy for that long, given the constraints and
21 requirements that we have to service as many people
22 as we have.

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1 So I don=t want to belabor the point,
2 but let=s not let this happen again. So, again,
3 thank you for your work and uncovering all of these
4 things, and let=s keep doing it.

5 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: And for the
6 work, I would like -- so that it will be placed in
7 the minutes, could you tell us what year these
8 vouchers came about?

9 MR. GARRETT: 2013.

10 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: So from
11 2013 until today, they have been set on a shelf.

12 MR. GARRETT: Correct.

13 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: And that
14 means that we have gone through several directors,
15 and that would also mean that each director that
16 we have gone through from that point in time had
17 that knowledge, whether or not this board had the
18 knowledge or not. I want that on the minutes.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: I would offer
20 the board approved it, but then that=s all we knew,
21 and so that=s why --

22 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Yeah.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: -- I=d like to
2 go through the exercise of understanding where all
3 of our vouchers are, so that we can=t two years from
4 now say we didn=t know about this.

5 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Thank you,
6 Commissioner Slover.

7 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: And before I call for
8 a vote on this, I just want to really commend the
9 staff here at the Housing Authority for moving
10 aggressively on addressing -- trying to address the
11 environmental issues that have cropped up. Some
12 have been around for a long time, but really putting
13 a new focus and resources on it.

14 And, again, Director Garrett, why don=t
15 I just congratulate you and your staff for moving
16 aggressively. I want to single out Chelsea, who
17 is in the audience, for spearheading this effort.

18 And with that, I would entertain a
19 motion.

20 COMMISSIONER ORTIZ GAUD: Motion.

21 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Is there a second?

22 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Second.

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1 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Roll call?

2 MS. McNAIR: Thank you. Commissioner
3 Council?

4 COMMISSIONER COUNCIL: Yes.

5 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Kenner?

6 COMMISSIONER KENNER: Yes.

7 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Ortiz Gaud?

8 COMMISSIONER ORTIZ GAUD: Yes.

9 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner St. Jean?

10 COMMISSIONER ST. JEAN: Yes.

11 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner
12 Vann-Ghasri?

13 COMMISSIONER VANN-GHASRI: Yes.

14 MS. McNAIR: Commissioner Slover?

15 VICE CHAIRMAN SLOVER: Yes.

16 MS. McNAIR: Chairman Albert?

17 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Yes.

18 MS. McNAIR: You have seven yes. The
19 resolution is approved.

20 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: Great. So we do
21 have another public comment period. No one else
22 signed up for it. Did you guys say everything you

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1 wanted to say? Nicole and Daniel? Any other
2 public housing residents in our midst, come on up.

3 MS. ODOM: I just wanted to say for my
4 community, if we could just make the same efforts
5 for them. A lot of people didn=t know about the
6 voucher. They were scared. I mean, at this
7 point, they=re like me. We can=t sleep, we=re
8 stressed out, and the information is so important.
9 And I can=t say that enough. If we had known this
10 a long time ago, we would have made the necessary
11 arrangements for our families already.

12 So I=d just ask if, you know, we could
13 just really reach out to them with open arms and
14 let them know that they=re okay. And, you know,
15 it=s a sensitive thing for them, and so I=m just
16 asking that they be treated fairly and
17 respectfully.

18 It=s a hard thing to just up and move.
19 You know, we already live in stressful lives, and
20 we=re doing our best. So I would just ask that we
21 just really put your arms around Barry Farm right
22 now, please.

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1 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: We hear you. Thank
2 you so much.

3 MR. GARRETT: Not a problem.

4 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: So our next Board of
5 Commissioners meeting will be held five days from
6 now, February 12th right here.

7 MS. McNAIR: September.

8 CHAIRMAN ALBERT: I mean September. I
9 was just checking to see if you were paying
10 attention. At 1:00 p.m., and we look forward to
11 having you all here again.

12 With that, our meeting is adjourned.
13 Thank you.

14 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
15 went off the record at 2:52 p.m.)
16
17
18
19

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