



Minutes for Committee on Housing Choice Vouchers October 25, 2019

10/25/2019 | 10:10 AM - 11:30 AM - Eastern Time (US and Canada)

1133 N. Capitol St. NE Executive Director's Conference Room

Commissioners (5)

Franselene St. Jean; NaKeisha Neal Jones; Aquarius Vann-Ghasri; Antonio Taliaferro; Dyana Forester

Commissioner Forester joined via phone

Member absent: Commissioners Slover and Council

Opening Remarks

Chairman St. Jean welcomed the Committee and opened the meeting at approximately 10:10 am.

Chairman St. Jean asked for an introduction of staff and Commissioners.

Draft minutes of September 24, 2019

The draft minutes of September 24, 2019 were acknowledged and accepted as final.

HCVP Briefings

Carolyn Punter, Director of HCVP asked Manuel Sistrunk of HCVP to provide an overview of the HCVP briefings he does with participants. Chairman St. Jean asked that credit counseling information be added to the HCVP briefings. Commissioner Neal Jones stated that at the time of the briefing it may be a little late for credit counseling. Ms. Punter stated that Mr. Garrett has charged the department with getting families credit counseling earlier who are part of the 14 extremely urgent properties to prepare them sooner. She also made clear that applicants are not yet our clients. Commissioner Vann-Ghasri asked if DCHA could do a video with tips on resources for credit counseling for residents. Ms. Debra Frazier, an HCVP resident added that paying utility bills on time should count toward building good credit. There was discussion regarding credit criteria, working with landlords regarding credit and the initial HCVP lease being 12 months. Commissioner Vann-Ghasri asked if Director Garrett could request from HUD the use of vouchers for month to month rentals.

There was discussion regarding reminding voucher holders the importance of using the vouchers and not allowing them to expire. Ms. Punter stated that participants receive monthly tickler reminders every 30 days. Ms. Frazier asked that the reminders be part of the monthly newsletter. Director Garrett added that a link in the electronic newsletter could be used to direct them to the YouTube video and other social media content that has been established to assist participants.

There was discussion regarding the inspection of units. It was stated that in some special circumstances there are some units that have been pre-inspected sometimes for a meet and lease. The normal inspection time is 10 to 14 business days and expedited from a meet and lease may be 5 business days. There was discussion regarding utility allowances and calculations for utility payments. HCVP is working on ways like utility cards where residents can only use them to pay their utilities. Ms. Frazier asked if it could be clearer in the briefings the landlord and tenant process and the agreement with the utility company.

There was an overview of the voucher, lease agreement and the HAP contract in a briefing and what they mean. It was requested that briefing information run continuously on the lobby display. There was discussion regarding security deposits and services that offer funding to assist with them. Chairman St. Jean wants HCVP involved at the community engagement meetings to talk about the voucher process. Some participants have expressed fear of certain neighborhoods and having issues with some landlords. Director Garrett stated that any landlord that presents units that aren't of quality will be rejected and any issues with landlords should be reported to HCVP.

Commissioner Forester asked if there is a consideration of children in the relocation process, working with schools for out of boundary status as well financial planning in addition to the credit counseling. Director Garrett added there are some participants who may be only a raise away from being over income and we are preparing them for their next steps.

Aisha Thompson, Senior Program Manager stated that a new standard operating procedure (sop) for HCVP will be available on November 1st. Commissioner Neal Jones thanked the HCVP team for the meeting and stated that she appreciated all of the work that is being done.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.