



**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
OF  
HARRIS COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY**

**June 18, 2025**

**THE STATE OF TEXAS     §  
  §  
COUNTY OF HARRIS     §**

**I.     CALL TO ORDER AND RECORD OF ATTENDANCE**

The Board of Commissioners of Harris County Housing Authority met in a regular session, open to the public on the 21st day of May 2025, at Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA), located at 1933 Hussion Street, inside the boundaries of Harris County in Houston, Texas. Chairman Gerald Womack called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m. and called the roll of the duly constituted officers and members of the Board:

Gerald Womack	Chairman	Present
Paul Shanklin	Vice Chairman	Present
Asheley Gilbert	Commissioner	Present
Laolu Davies-Yemitan	Commissioner	Present 1:30 pm
Carrie Rai	Commissioner	Present

Melissa Quijano, Chief Executive Officer of the Harris County Housing Authority, and Nickolas Santulli, General Counsel from the Harris County Attorney’s Office, attended all or portions of the meeting. Additional attendees included the following:

Beverly Burroughs, Paul Curry, Dominique King, Terrance James, Kitrina Craft, Kimberly Rogers, Vivian Clark, Terumi Shorter, Katherine Escamilla, Jacqueline Benjamin, Arielene Davis, Idrena Williams, Jesus Manchaca, Ana Diaz, Christina Wright, and Tabitha Lockhart of the Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA) attended.

**II. OPENING PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Paul Curry opened the meeting with prayer, followed by Commissioner Asheley Gilber, who led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Vice Chairman Paul Shanklin, who led the Texas Pledge.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**ACTION ITEM 1:**

**Approval of the Minutes of the May 21, 2025, Board Meeting**

Vice Chairman Paul Shanklin commented that although the minutes were lengthy, he hoped everyone read them. Vice Chairman stated he saw nothing wrong them and moved to approve them from the board meeting on April 16, 2025. Commissioner Asheley Gilbert seconded, and the motion carried.

Chairman Gerald Womack stated that it was 1:12 pm and began speaking about going into the executive session. Vice Chairman Shanklin asked if there were any executive reports and suggested having them presented first. Chairman Womack agreed with Vice Chairman Shanklin to do the monthly reports first. Chairman Womack acknowledged that Commissioner Laolu Davies-Yemitan would be attending the meeting late.

**V. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

Ms. Melissa Quijano, Chief Executive Officer, presented the CEO report for the month of June 2025 as follows:

Ms. Quijano stated that she did not have anything in the books for the CEO Report this time. She wanted to do something different and give the reporting numbers for the past fiscal year for HCHA. She concurred with the staff on June 17, 2025, to review the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) numbers as she does every year to highlight what is being done. She wanted to note how each team plays a part in providing the service at HCHA. HCHA took 230,654 calls, 10,358 inspections were conducted, and 5,864 annual recertifications were completed. There were eight new homeowners in 2024, with the past 2 years being the highest (in 2023, there were 10 new homeowners added to the program). To date, 96 homeowners have been assisted by the HAP, with \$570.614 paid to mortgages. There were 86 homeless Veterans Affairs Supporting Housing (VASH) vouchers issued. The total paid for all programs was \$65,340,289 in rental assistance. There are currently 5,155 vouchers, and an average of 14,160 families are assisted each month. With the Bernicia Place Development, there is now additional funding, which brings the total units being assisted by HCHA in Harris County to 3203.

Chairman Gerald Womack noted that the board and staff have worked very hard to ensure HCHA is stable. HCHA is now one of the best Housing Authorities in the country, and it didn't happen overnight by one individual; it happened because everyone worked together. There were some tough decisions to make years back. The agency didn't close, no one was laid off, the same staff was kept, and we worked through it. HCHA is now

looked upon as one of the better Housing Authorities by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Harris County, and the whole community.

Chairman Womack stated that the Board is grateful for leadership such as that of previous CEO Horace Allison, who did a great job. Ms. Quijano was under his leadership. She was hired as the CEO and has done a great job. The Board wants HCHA to grow and do an even better job. No one is permanent (Commissioners are appointed). During that appointed time, there is a mission and a vision for HCHA.

Chairman Womack noted that people come to him every day regarding their issues related to HCHA. He and the other Commissioners receive calls regarding people's housing issues (homelessness, voucher issues, and very critical issues related to housing) every day, and they do their best.

Chairman Womack acknowledged that on a Saturday evening, a man came to his office, pulled up his shirt, and showed him his wounds from all his different operations due to health issues. The man stated he had no way of paying his rent and would soon be homeless. All his finances were gone; he would be put out on the street if he didn't receive help. A very affluent man, who almost lost everything due to sickness. Chairman Womack stated that he immediately sent the gentleman information to HCHA to get him assistance.

Chairman Womack stated he would like to see HCHA assist more people in becoming homeowners. There are currently 96 homeowners, and there is no way that the number shouldn't be higher with the money available in Harris County. For the number to increase, Board members and HCHA staff need to work together. The Board members are advocating for more homeownership.

Chairman Womack acknowledged that everyone is appreciated at the agency (HCHA) and that everyone notices that he always advocates for the workers. Without workers, nothing would be done. The workers are the ones who make up the agency (HCHA).

Chairman Womack noted that Ms. Quijano's hard work was appreciated. She has chosen to go in a different direction, and sometimes that happens. Her work along with her staff's work is appreciated, but the agency (HCHA) is not built on him, because he is going to go too. The Commissioners Court can appoint another person on any day they choose to. The agency (HCHA) must keep going because too many residents depend on it daily. Chairman Womack reiterated that the Board was appreciative and that it was moving forward.

Ms. Quijano thanked Chairman Womack and all the Commissioners.

Chairman Womack noted that he asked Ms. Quijano to stay until another CEO is hired. There is a committee formed to do the hiring process along with seeking outside counsel. Ms. Quijano chose to go in a different direction publicly, and the Board has accepted her resignation as it relates to her request that she would be retiring. Her hard work is appreciated, and the Board is proud of her work. Chairman Womack is looking forward

to people like Ms. Quijano becoming HCHA's CEO. Someone who started at the Front Desk and worked her way up and is now the CEO of HCHA. Ms. Quijano is a prime example. The staff should note that if you do good work in later years, it will pay off, because you, too, could be a CEO.

Ms. Quijano thanked the Board. Chairman Womack stated that Ms. Quijano was not gone yet and has been asked to stay on until a permanent replacement has been found. She submitted her request, and the Board has accepted it. If she is needed, she can be called just like the previous CEO Mr. Allison is called regarding questions and Chairman Womack states he wants to do the same with Ms. Quijano.

Ms. Quijano thanked the Board of Commissioners and staff again.

Lastly, Chairman Womack wanted everyone to know that Ms. Quijano and the staff's work was appreciated. A celebration for Ms. Quijano will be planned soon.

## **VI. FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

Paul Curry (HCHA Financial Director) presented the April financial statements as reported in the Board Book on June 18, 2025.

Mr. Curry reported the consolidated financial statements, representing the cash flow balances for the program's reporting period. Mr. Curry explained that cash flows could fluctuate based on HUD funding, as they might send more than is needed during one period and none the next, allowing the overage to be consumed. This could result in a deficit and a negative account balance.

Vice Chairman Paul Shanklin asked if the programs ever catch up regarding the negative balance on page 3. Mr. Curry stated yes and that U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is in the hole with HCHA with some restricted funds. Positive balances should be seen in the reports soon.

Mr. Curry reported that the consolidated budget reflected revenue 5% over budget and expenses 7% over budget.

Chairman Womack asked how much money HCHA has to spend at this time. Mr. Curry stated that the bank balance is \$17,220,441, which has some restricted funds. The unrestricted funds for Affordable Housing are \$7,372,125 for real estate development. Chairman Womack stated he wanted the Real Estate Development Department to focus on developing more property with seven million dollars available.

Chairman Womack acknowledged that Commissioner Laolu Davies-Yemitan was now in attendance for the meeting at 1:30 pm.

Chairman Womack stated that he was excited to have Commissioner Davies-Yemitan and Commissioner Asheley Gilbert on the Affordable Housing Committee, which will

work with the Real Estate Development Department to provide more affordable housing.

Mr. Curry reviewed the contracts that expire within the next six months, covering the period ending July 31, 2025.

Chairman Womack asked if HCHA could piggyback on the life insurance policies with Harris County so that more money would go back to the employees. Mr. Curry stated he would check into that. Chairman Womack asked Mr. Nickolas Santulli (Assistant County Attorney with the Harris County Attorney's Office) if he would work with Mr. Curry on the issue. Mr. Santulli stated that he would. Chairman Womack would like this issue addressed on the agenda for the July 18, 2025, meeting.

Commissioner Davies-Yemitan asked if the expired contracts were from last year. Are the contracts being handled on a month-to-month basis.

Chairman Womack asked if HCHA is obligated to the management companies listed or is there an option to change? Chairman Womack wanted to know why Allied Orion was still listed, being that there had been an issue with the service that they provided from Sierra Meadows.

Ms. Dominique King responded that there were three contracts with Allied Orion because there had not previously been an issue. The contract with Sierra Meadows was terminated as of May 31, 2025. A procurement was placed for The Villas at Eastwood (Fenix Estates). There have been interviews for the applications and we are currently awaiting the results, so that the termination can be scheduled. Now that HCHA is not going to sell the Heritage Estates Property action can be put into place for that property as well. In the event that the Heritage Estates property sold, HCHA did not want to hire a new management company in the process.

Lastly, Mr. Curry answered questions from the Board.

## **VII. HCV AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEPARTMENTS PRESENTATION**

Mr. Terrance James (on behalf of Ms. Debra McCray, Housing Choice Voucher Director) presented the HCV lease-up rates as reflected in the April 2025 Monthly Reports, which are included in the June 18, 2025, Board Book.

Mr. James reported the utilization in April 2025, for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) was 97%, for the Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Program was 91%, and for the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program was 85%. Mr. James stated there were no home closings in April 2025. The HCV and VASH Programs utilized 100% of the HAP funding, for a total of \$5,213,564, and the EHV Program utilized 209% of the funding, for a total of \$228,878.

For April 2025, 519 Annual Recertifications were processed in a timely manner at 100%. 13 new VASH Vouchers were issued. There are 3048 applicants on the HCHA's HCV waiting list.

Mr. James reported that 1041 inspections were completed for April 2025, 928 of which were Annual and Initial Inspections at 85%. Eighty-seven Special/Damage or Emergency inspections were completed, at 13%. The Quality Control inspections totaled 26, at 2%.

Mr. James reported that for April 2025, the yearly average passed for Initial Inspections is 98%, and for Annual Inspections, it is 88%.

Lastly, Mr. James answered questions from the Board.

Ms. Tabitha Lockhart, Executive Administrative Assistant, apologized to the Board regarding the technical difficulties with the presentations not being projected for all to see. Chairman Womack responded that there are technical issues in this life and it happens.

Ms. Dominique King, Director of Real Estate Development, reported all information for the stabilized properties and the status of all properties within the Affordable Housing Division for April 2025 as presented within the May 21, 2025, Board Book. Ms. King identified the high-performing properties. Ms. King reported that there are 54 pre-leased units from all vacancies, which is a 96% occupancy overall, our entire portfolio.

Ms. King moved to proposed and affordable housing developments that are under construction.

Ms. King reported that for the HAY Center, personnel is being recruited at this time.

Ms. King reported on developments under construction; the Bluestem Apartments are 99% complete, and the project is preparing for retainage release and project close-out.

Ms. King reported that the First Met Senior Apartments project is 99% complete. Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspections have passed all phases, and preleasing has commenced.

Ms. King reported that for the Villas at Eastwood (Fenix Estates), the projected close-out date for the cost certification is July 2025.

#### **VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board went into an executive session at 1:55 p.m. to consult with its attorneys to seek or receive legal advice regarding pending or contemplated litigation, discuss the value or transfer of real property, or discuss any item listed on the agenda.

No action was taken.

#### **IX. RECONVENE**

The Board of Commissioners reconvened for the public session at 2:29 p.m.

**X. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

**ACTION ITEM 2:**

**Resolution authorizing the Chief Executive Officer to enter into an interlocal agreement with Harris County for the provision of Legal Services**

Commissioner Laolu Davies-Yemitan moved to approve the resolution; Commissioner Carrie Rai seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried. (25-20)

**ACTION ITEM 3:**

**Resolution authorizing the negotiation and execution of a contract for Banking and Investment Services**

Commissioner Laolu Davies-Yemitan moved to approve the resolution; Commissioner Carrie Rai seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried. (25-21)

**ACTION ITEM 4:**

**Resolution honoring Dominique King as the Harris County Housing Authority employee of the quarter (July-September 2025)**

Commissioner Laolu Davies-Yemitan moved to approve the resolution; Commissioner Carrie Rai seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried. (25-22)

Commissioner Rai requested a motion regarding a consulting firm to assist in hiring a new Executive Director and Deputy Director. Vice Chairman Shanklin seconded the motion. Chairman Womack stated that after much research, the Commissioner of Human Resources Committee would work on that with Gaines & Gaines. Gaines and Gaines have been used in the past.

Commissioner Carrie Rai moved to approve the use of the consulting firm Gans, Gans, and Associates for the hiring of the Executive Director and Deputy Director; Vice Chairman Paul Shanklin seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Laolu Davies-Yemitan moved to adjourn at 3:08 p.m.  
Commissioner Carrie Rai seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried.

Adopted and approved this 16th day of July 2025.



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Gerald Womack, Chairman



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Melissa Quijano, Secretary