



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

**March 19, 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 19th day of March 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 1:22 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	Absent
Laolu Davies-Yemitan	Commissioner	Absent
Carrie Rai	Commissioner	Present

Melissa Quijano, CEO of the Harris County Housing Authority, and Nicholas 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, Terumi Shorter, Terrance James, Kimberly Rogers, Vivian Clark, Arielene Davis, Terumi Shorter, Maricruz Cruz, Phylcia Torres, Mary Williams, Daniel Narcisse, Sherika Thompson, Tabitha Lockhart, and various members of the Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA) attended. Tom Scott (Chairman Emeritus) and Kim Martin (CEO) from CORE Management Group were also present.

## II. OPENING PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Gerald Womack opened the meeting with prayer, followed by Commissioner Carrie Rai, who led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Commissioner Paul Shanklin, who led the Texas Pledge.

## III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There are no comments. Chairman Womack acknowledged the from the Office of the Harris County Attorney General Counsel Nicholas Santulli and other attendees.

## IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

### ACTION ITEM 1:

#### **Approval of the Minutes of the February 19, 2025, Board Meeting**

Commissioner Carrie Rai moved to approve the nominations; Vice Chairman Paul Shanklin seconded, and the motion carried

## V. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Ms. Melissa Quijano presented the January Monthly Report for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program.

Ms. Quijano reported that on February 20, 2025, HCHA staff met with City of Houston and Harris County housing development leaders to discuss updates, and the housing needs of the community.

Ms. Quijano noted that on February 24, 2025, HCHA staff with Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrain Garcia staff to discuss community resources for assistance.

Ms. Quijano reported that the Affordable Housing Department had compliance monitoring visits from the Harris County Community Services Department on the following dates and developments:

- March 4, 2025 – Cornerstone – HOME Program Compliance
- March 10, 2025 – The Retreat at Westlake – Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Compliance

Ms. Quijano noted that HCHA had a brunch on March 6, 2025, in honor of Employee Appreciation Day. Ms. Quijano thanked the staff for their hard work and dedication.

Ms. Quijano informed the Board that throughout March, the Real Estate Development Department, along with the Finance Department, have been working diligently on the Northwood conversion. The conversion will be completed in the coming week.

Ms. Quijano advised the Board that on March 14, 2025, a continuing resolution was approved by the United States Senate for funding through the end of the fiscal year on September 30, 2025. This provides Housing Choice Voucher funding for families. HUD has approved the HCHA budget; the actual amount will be known within 60 days following this approval. The Housing Assistance Program (HAP) received \$10.4

million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the months of March and April 2025.

Ms. Quijano informed the Board that HCHA received confirmation from HUD that the Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) Audit submission was accepted and approved on January 13, 2025. HUD would like to congratulate and applaud the HCHA Staff and Board on their audit report. Chairman Gerald Womack congratulated the HCHA staff on such an accomplishment.

Ms. Quijano advised the Board regarding HUD's (Public Housing Authority) PHA Governance:

HUD's Public and Indian Housing Information Center (PIC) dataset is an annual extract from HUD's administrative system, which manages financial controls over Indian Housing, Housing Voucher, and Public Housing Programs. Ms. Quijano stated that the Board of Commissioners' contact information was also being updated as part of this system.

Ms. Quijano notified the Board of the following HCHA Updates:

1. HCHA is preparing for the closeout of the Fiscal Year with the REAC and the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP), which is due May 30, 2025.
2. A Procurement Specialist began working at HCHA on March 11, 2025. She is currently training and will be a valuable asset to the Directors in terms of procurement.
3. An Accountant II will begin working with HCHA on March 25, 2025.
4. The HCV Inspections Clerk is scheduled to start working with HCHA in April 2025.
5. The General Counsel position is posted on the website, and Ms. Quijano thanked the Board for their input on writing and creating the job description. Commissioner Paul Shanklin inquired about the actual posting date and was informed that it occurred on March 7, 2025. Chairman Womack inquired whether the positions had been posted elsewhere and whether there had been any responses to the General Counsel position. Ms. Quijano directed the question to Ms. Vivian Clark, HCHA Executive Administrator. Ms. Clark stated the positions are listed on Indeed and the Texas Housing Association and that HCHA is open to any recommendations. At this time, no resumes have been received for the General Counsel position. Chairman Womack stated that all employment openings should be sent to all the HCHA Commissioners. Although they are not in a position to hire, they can pass the information on. There will be communication regarding other options. Commissioner Carrie Rai asked if the local HUD could assist, and Chairman Womack stated that he had previously asked Lorraine Walls, Director of the HUD Houston, Texas office, in the past. Chairman Womack suggested asking Ms. Walls again for assistance in filling the position. Ms. Quijano noted that the HCHA has grown from 36 to 43 from 2022 to

2025 with 6 current vacancies. Additional vacancies have been created and will be noted at the Board meeting in April.

Lastly, Ms. Quijano answered questions from the Board.

#### **VI. FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

Paul Curry (HCHA Financial Director) presented the January financial statements as reported in the March 19, 2025, Board Book.

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.

Mr. Curry reported that the consolidated budget reflected revenue that was 12% over budget and expenses that were 11% over budget.

Commissioner Shanklin inquired about potential delays in receiving funds due to the current issues within the Federal Government. Mr. Curry reiterated that Ms. Quijano previously stated that the funding had been approved and there should be no delays. Commissioner Shanklin clarified that he was asking whether there would be issues due to staff shortage with the Federal Government and realizes that Mr. Curry may not have the answer to that. Mr. Curry stated that he would look into it to find an answer. Chairman Womack reminded the Board that 90 days of reserve are currently available in the event of a delay that may cause a funding issue. Chairman Womack stated there should be direct contact with HUD at the Federal level and not just the regional level. Mr. Curry replied that he has a contact in Washington who has confirmed with him that if more funding is needed, it will be supplied.

Mr. Curry reviewed the contracts set to expire within the next six months, covering the period ending April 30, 2025. Chairman Womack, regarding the contracts, questioned the Vacancies at Sierra Meadows and The Villas at Eastwood. Ms. Dominique HCHA Director Real Estate Development provided information regarding the "waitlist" progressive process. The waitlist must complete its process before vacancies can be made available to the public market. Chairman Womack wants the Real Estate Department to provide the Board with a diagram chart on how to expedite filling vacancies by cutting through the red tape.

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 Monthly Reports for January 2025, included in the March 19, 2025, Board Book.

Mr. James reported that in January 2025, the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) was utilized at 98%, the Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) Program was utilized at 92%, and the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program was utilized at 88%. Mr. James stated that there were no home closings in January 2025.

Commissioner Rai inquired about the 85-voucher decrease in the HCV Program since 2024. Mr. James stated that he would look into it and provide her with the answer. Commissioner Rai wanted to know why the ECV utilization had decreased. Mr. James explained that the ECVs could not be reissued. Chairman Womack reiterated that the City of Houston has \$125,000 available to assist voucher holders who wish to purchase a home. The purchase must be made in the City of Houston.

Mr. James stated that HCHA is currently reporting 100% regarding the SEMAP.

Mr. James reported 188 Initial Inspections were completed, with 155 passing for an 82% pass rate. 33 units passed the second inspection, bringing the total pass rate to 100%. 339 Annual Inspections were completed, with 285 passing, resulting in an 84% pass rate. 54 units passed the second inspection, bringing the total pass rate to 93%. 4 units did not pass inspection the second time, with a fail rate of 7%. Commissioner Rai inquired as to how inspections are conducted. Mr. James explained that annual inspections are done bi-annually (every other year). Ms. Quijano stated that emergency inspections are also done as needed.

Lastly, Mr. James answered questions from the Board.

Ms. Dominique King reviewed the status of properties within the Affordable Housing Division for January 2025, which are included in the March 19, 2025, board book. Ms. King identified the high-performing properties.

Commissioner Rai wanted to know why there are 142 vacancies. Ms. King explained that some of the properties are at Market-Rate values and that, based on the demographics (location of the property, senior facilities, rental costs, etc.) of the area, this will impact the vacancies. If the facility does not want to drop or lower the rental rate, it will also cause the unit to remain vacant. If the unit stays vacant for 6 months or more than the rates will be dropped. Commissioner Rai requested to see if the issue is improving or not improving based on past performance. Ms. King stated that it would be for each development, and Commissioner Rai suggested that it might be just for the bottom three facilities. Ms. King advised that The Villas is a Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) facility, which would need to be considered as well. Other options are being explored to generate sustainable rental outcomes. Chairman Womack suggested having personal contact with civic organizations, social clubs, churches, and schools too. Ms. King explained the cost of the apartments, including the utilities, and that they are furnished at The Villas (\$487 to \$980). Chairman Womack suggested reaching out to a donor to donate furniture to save the agency money. Ms. King asked if the Board could reach out to some contacts as well to assist.

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

- Bernicia Place – METRO Southeast Transit Development has pre-development activities are ongoing. The estimated closing is for June 2025.
- The HAY Center personnel recruiting is underway at this time.
- The Bluestem Apartments (Twelve620) project is 99% complete. The project is preparing for retainage release and project close-out.
- The First Met Senior Apartments project is 99% complete. Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspections passed for all phases and the preleasing has commenced.

The Villas at Eastwood (Fenix Estates) Cost Certification is projected for close-out in March 2025.

Ms. King stated that she had reached out to The Trees of Houston Project and was just wanting to hear back from them. Chairman Womack thanked Ms. King and her department for the work that they do.

Lastly, Ms. King reviewed the status of each property's net income for January 2025.

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

The Board went into an executive session at 2:30 p.m. to consult with its attorneys, seek or receive legal advice, consult regarding pending or contemplated litigation, and discuss the value or transfer of real property.

#### **IX. RECONVENE**

The Board of Commissioners reconvened for the public session at 3:13 p.m.

#### **X. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

##### **ACTION ITEM 2:**

**Resolution honoring Maricruz Cruz as the Harris County Housing Authority Employee of the Quarter (April - June 2025)**

Vice Chairman Paul Shanklin moved to approve the resolution, and Commissioner Carrie Rai seconded the motion; the motion was carried. (25-10)

##### **ACTION ITEM 3:**

**Resolution approving Harris County Housing Authority's budget for fiscal year 2026**

Commissioner Rai, Chairman Womack, and Vice Chairman Shanklin had questions regarding the budget for employee salaries. Mr. Curry responded to the employee salaries listed on page 7 of the Financial Report, stating that he would have more information at the next Board meeting.

Vice Chairman Paul Shanklin moved to approve the resolution; Commissioner Carrie Rai seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried. (25-11)

**ACTION ITEM 4:**

**Resolution authorizing and negotiation and execution of a Interlocal agreement for cyber liability and data breach insurance**

Vice Chairman Paul Shanklin moved to approve the resolution; Commissioner Carrie Rai seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried. (25-12)

**ACTION ITEM 5:**

**Resolution authorizing HCHA Fenix Estates I, L.P. and Fenix Estates, LLC to request a loan extension for the Fenix Estates Commercial Loan (Villas at Eastwood)**

Vice Chairman Paul Shanklin moved to approve the resolution; Commissioner Carrie Rai seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried. (25-13)

**ACTION ITEM 6:**

**Resolution establishing a Human Resources, Budget and Finance Committee by the Board of Commissioners**

Chairman Womack announced that he had appointed Commissioner Rai to head this advising committee.

Vice Chairman Paul Shanklin moved to approve the resolution; Commissioner Carrie Rai seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried. (25-14)

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chairman Paul Shanklin moved to adjourn at 3:36 p.m.; Commissioner Carrie Rai seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried.

Adopted and approved this 16th day of April 2025.



Gerald Womack, Chairman



Melissa Quijano, Secretary

