



MEETING MINUTES

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

August 25, 2022- 9:00 a.m.

Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

<u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>STAFF PRESENT</u>
Renee Brouse	Komi Kalevor
Sheila Greenlaw-Fink	Jacob Boyett
Narendar Sahgal	Melissa Sonsalla
Nina Sparr	Ling Huang-Dressel
Nina Stafford	Leslie Gong
Melinda Bell	Mike McLeod
Dave Bachman	Liz Morris
Sid Scott	Will Seals
Gena Briggs	Jes Larson
John Epstein	Emily Nichols
Eric Schmidt	Peter Ladley
Carine Arendes	
	<u>GUESTS</u>
<u>ABSENT</u>	Rick Peel
Alma Flores	
	<u>HABOD MEMBERS PRESENT</u>

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – 9:02 a.m. A quorum was present.

II. DISCUSSION – ORAL COMMUNICATIONS and MEMBER UPDATES

Sheila Greenlaw-Fink announced CPAH will be looking for a new Executive Director as she will be retiring.

Carine Arendes reported the Tigard City Council is considering new policies regarding tenant protections. She asked who to contact from the county to answer questions the council has in regards to the potential new policy. Questions can be sent to Komi Kalevor with Melissa Sonsalla as the staff contact.

Melinda Bell announced the Union Gospel Mission broke ground on their new Women’s and Children’s Center.



III. ACTION – APPROVAL OF MINUTES @ 9:10 a.m.

The committee voted to approve May 26, 2022 meeting minutes.

Motion: Eric Schmidt

Second: Dave Bachman

Vote: All in favor

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Presented by Komi Kalevor, Executive Director. Komi announced Katherine Galian has been hired as the new CoC Program Manager for Washington County. Shannon Wilson is being promoted to the Office of Community Development Manager. The Housing Department will be moving to their new office space at Adams Crossing shortly. Dr. Richard Cho, HUD senior advisor for housing and services visited the Washington County Housing Department to observe and discuss the advancements the county has made toward reducing homelessness. He noted, the Rental Housing team has done an excellent job with emergency housing vouchers with a 92% utilization rate. On Tuesday, August 30 the Valfre at Avenida 26 in Forest Grove will hold their grand opening.

With such a high demand within the homeless community, why are occupancy rates less than 100 percent?

There are several factors such as time lapses between people leaving housing and new tenants getting approved to move in. There are also delays in inspections of properties at times due to additional issues needing to be addressed and the inspectors are short staffed at times.

How is Washington County able to have such a high percentage of utilization with emergency housing vouchers with such a limited housing supply in the county?

Having the CoC imbedded within the Housing Authority has enabled the county to move forward in a more expeditious manner from other housing authorities. This partnership along with a great connection with service providers brought in a number of applications and were able to move individuals through quickly. The emergency housing vouchers included assistance other vouchers do not such as move in and application cost assistance. They will also be working with HUD to possibly attain additional vouchers that other housing authorities were not able to utilize to house additional individuals.

There was mention over 400 individuals and families have been housed over the past year, how do those numbers translate into numbers of households housed?

This information will be sent out to the HAC.



Are the numbers of people served that was addressed in the Director's report something that is sustainable over the long-term or only short-term due to recent federal program funding?

The growth reported comes from Supportive Housing Services (SHS) funding which comes from the SHS 10-year levy.

V. GUEST SPEAKER

A. Richard Peel Presentation

Rick Peel with the Oregon Law Center presented on Oregon Landlord Tenant law. The Oregon Law Center provides legal services for low income individuals relating to civil and legal issues in the northwestern portion of Oregon. They also provide resources and workshops to the public. This report touches on important issues in Chapter 90 of the Oregon Landlord Tenant law statute.

Tenancy Types:

- Week-to-week which has limited tenant protections.
- Month to month whereby both tenant and landlord can terminate the tenancy by giving a 30 day notice. After a year the landlord can only terminate the tenancy with a landlord cause notice such as non-payment or violating the lease. The only case this does not apply is with landlords who share a building with a tenant such as a duplex.
- Fixed term tenancy is a contract with a set lease period. Tenants can only break their lease with added financial penalty. There are special circumstances such as victims of domestic violence which can break the lease without penalty. There are also circumstances where a tenant can break the lease without penalty if the landlord does not comply with the lease.

Landlords Obligations:

- Keep the premises habitable (everything provided is used as intended).
- Landlords must disclose if the tenant will pay the landlord or the utility companies directly for monthly utilities.
- Landlords can access without notice in case of emergencies but must let tenants know within 24-hours after they have entered. Outside of emergencies, landlord's must provide 24-hour notice to enter. Access is allowed to show the property, make renovations, make repairs identified by the tenant, or to address yard maintenance if agreed upon. Tenants do have a right to oppose entry if there is a legitimate reason to reschedule the proposed entry date and time.
- Landlords may not retaliate against a tenant. The tenant must prove intent of retaliation due to a prior incident.
- Landlords may not discriminate against victims of domestic violence but may ask for verification. Locks can be changed in this instance and the landlord will have no legal obligation to the perpetrator of domestic violence.
- Landlord's can charge a tenant screening fee for evaluating applicants but are required to give written notice to the applicant of screening criteria.
- Upon a tenant moving out, landlords are required to advise tenants of the security deposit paid and disclose to the tenant any reason they are keeping any portion of the deposit upon departure. If last month's rent was collected it is required to be applied at the time of notice of the termination of tenancy.



Tenant Duties:

- Use the premises as intended and keep them clean.
- Test smoke and CO2 detector every six months.
- Behave in a way that will not disturb the peace with their neighbors.
- Cannot intentionally damage the premises.
- Pay rent as agreed upon.

Evictions:

- Landlord must provide a written notice to end tenancy and tenants have the right to go to court to dispute it. If the tenant refuses to comply, the landlord can pursue eviction.
- Legal action is necessary to change the locks or physically have a tenant removed from the property.
- Termination dates must be in writing and specify the vacate date and served in accordance with the law with specified language included.
- There is a 24-hour notice which are due to extreme or outrageous acts by the tenant or the manufacturing of drugs on the premises.
- There is a 30-day notice of termination due to a violation of the rental agreement. The tenant has the opportunity to cure or fulfill the violation. The landlord cannot file for an eviction for six months after that time but can give a 10 day repeat notice if a similar incident occurs. This 10 day timeline will revert back to the 72 hour notice after September 30, 2022.
- After the first year of occupancy in Oregon, the no cause eviction cannot take place. If the landlord has a qualifying reason to end tenancy, a 90-day notice is required and if they own five or more units, the landlord must pay a relocation fee. Qualifying reasons include having a family member move in, sizeable renovations, or selling of the property.

Rent Increases

- Landlords may not increase the rent in the first year of tenancy.
- After the first year, rent can be increased by 7% plus the previous year's consumer price index.
- A 90-day written notice must be given for any price increases. Rent increases can be found [here](#).

He noted legislation passed an air conditioning bill in 2021 which allows tenant protection to install an air conditioning unit with certain conditions.

Does cause of eviction apply to transitional housing?

There is a statute that pertains to terminating out of transitional housing situations that relates to drug and alcohol free housing. There is a set of criteria that needs to be met.

What happens if a landlord does not provide a utility bill to a tenant within the 30 day timeframe?

There is a damages provision in the law that mandates landlords reimburse whatever expenses were incurred by the tenant for the utilities.



What happens to tenants who have applied but have not been contacted for rental assistance under the protections that were put into place during Covid that are ending at the end of September 2022?

There may be a legislative or administrative action to assist tenants in situations like this but the former regulations will go into effect in October where the rental assistance may be beneficial.

Are there any regulations in place to monitor screening fees and is there an affordability rule?

There are no regulations in place. The application screening charge statute states landlords can only charge the amount it takes to have an applicant screened. However, there are local ordinances that address screening criteria and fees. The general rule of thumb is for a tenant to make three times the amount of rent.

VI. RESOLUTIONS / ACTION ITEMS

A. Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Action Plan

Peter Ladley noted the FSS program was implemented by HUD to assist families to move toward housing self-sufficiency. In this program families receive an FSS coach, a HUD funded savings (escrow) account, an opportunity of a matched savings (IDA Saver) account, the opportunity to build up skills, and resources. On May 17, 2022, HUD implemented new rules as it relates to FSS. These changes promote economic growth and provide more accessibility to low-income households. Detailed changes to the FSS program and the draft FSS Action Plan for Washington County was distributed to HAC members.

Key Changes to the FSS Program by HUD:

- Expanding voucher type eligibility to include Foster Youth Independence (FYI) and the Home Ownership Program (HOP)
- More flexible requirements for Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) members
- Allow non-HOH (head of household) members to sign FSS contracts to earn escrow
- More flexible conditions for mandatory goals and contract length
- Escrow calculations are being revised to increase escrow amounts
- Escrow forfeitures are now allowed to be used for supportive services
- More flexible definitions of supportive services
- Extends the conditions to collect escrow funds
- Give participating families more input into goal completion and contract terms

He explained, the Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) works with the FSS Coordinator to ensure a community partnership is attained in the program. HAC members are encouraged to become part of the PCC. Once the revised FSS Action Plan is approved by HUD, new enrollments will be on hold until the new contract implementation is completed. Existing participants will sign a new contract and then the program will reopen to participants providing an explanation of new rules changes. For further questions or information you can contact [Emily Nichols](#) or [Peter Ladley](#).

Can someone be on the FSS program for longer than five years?

Yes, an extension can be requested for up to two additional years.



Is HUD taking into consideration the circumstances during Covid when the building was shut down and everybody was isolated to their homes?

HUD has approved more extensions due to Covid to provide the support the program was intended to provide during the pandemic.

Can FSS participants apply for a second IDA?

Washington County currently works with Casa of Oregon for IDAs which allow participants to apply for IDA twice in their lifetime. If someone applies for and completes their IDA, after a two year waiting period if they are still in the FSS program, they can apply for a second IDA.

Home Ownership Program (HOP)

The Home Ownership Program is closely connected with the FSS program but not the same. The staff member managing the HOP program recently retired which has brought a bit of a pause until staff is trained to take over the work. For those interested in the program, they can email housingfss@washington.or.gov.

How does the escrow earned income get calculated?

As the earned income increases, the tenant rent responsibility increases and continues paying that rent to their landlord. However, the increase in income is calculated to identify how much of that increase is from earned income and that amount is deposited into the participants escrow account. This is a matched savings that mirrors the increase in tenant rent due to earned income increases.

Can you explain the differences of elderly and non-elderly as it relates to the HOP program and what needs to happen to increase the capacity of families served in the FSS program?

Any household is eligible for the FSS program but not all households will benefit from the earned income increase. The current funding allows for 1.25 coordinators which serves about 75 people. If over 100 people are served, HUD will allow for two coordinators. Right now they are working to reach the 100 threshold with current staffing while maintaining the level of service to current participants.

Would individuals on fixed incomes benefit from the FSS program or are there other programs that might be more beneficial to them?

The FSS program might be a good fit for those on fixed incomes and if they apply for the program the coordinator can work to find out the best course of action for them. There are other resources available that can help people become more financially stable and secure.

Is the limited enrollment in the IDA program a cost issue or a staffing issue and is there movement toward encouraging additional contributions to this program to increase the number of participants?

The amount of scholarship funds provided by Casa of Oregon dictates the number of people that can be served in this program. There have been talks with the City of Tigard to contribute toward this program for their local residents. There are currently 41 people on the waiting list for the IDA program.

Does someone need to be in the FSS program to apply for the IDA program a second time?

Yes, they need to be a participant in the FSS program.



VII. ONGOING BUSINESS

There was no ongoing business on the agenda.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. October HAC Housing Forum

HAC members decided the October HAC Housing Forum will be a hybrid model, both in person and virtual.

Staff recommended topics for the forum:

Forming better partnerships with landlords

Housing with health plans

Economic development impact on affordable housing

Advocacy

HAC recommended topics for the forum:

Homeless Update – update from the 2021 report

Partnerships (city, landlords, health care)

How to increase the pace of housing production and decrease housing costs

Plans to reach Net Zero

Affordability in housing

IX. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A. Rental Assistance

This update was covered in the Family Self Sufficiency report under agenda item VI.

B. Additional Department Updates

For additional department updates, please refer to the HAC meeting packet.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Komi Kalevor
Secretary/Executive Director