

Minutes of the Joint Meeting
Of the Boards of Commissioners of the
HOUSING AUTHORITIES OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF FRESNO

Tuesday, June 23rd, 2020

5:00 P.M.

The Boards of Commissioners of the Housing Authorities of the City and County of Fresno met in a regular session on Tuesday, June 23, 2020, via teleconference.

1. The regular meeting was called to order at 5:09 p.m. by Board Chair, Commissioner Jones, of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Fresno. Roll call was taken and the Commissioners present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT: Adrian Jones, Chair
 Caine Christensen, Vice Chair
 Sharon Williams
 Ruby Yanez
 Stacy Vaillancourt

ABSENT: Terra Brusseau

The regular meeting was called to order at 5:09 p.m. by Board Chair, Commissioner Sablan, of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of Fresno County. Roll call was taken and the Commissioners present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT: Stacy Sablan, Chair
 Mary G. Castro, Vice Chair
 Cary Catalano
 Joey Fuentes
 Nikki Henry
 Valori Gallaher

ABSENT: None.

Also, in attendance were the following: Tracewell Hanrahan, COO/Deputy Executive Director, and Ken Price, Baker Manock and Jensen -General Counsel. Preston Prince, CEO/Executive Director was absent due to a pre-scheduled vacation.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AS POSTED (OR AMENDED)

COUNTY MOTION: *Commissioner Catalano moved, seconded by Commissioner Gallaher, to approve the agenda as posted.*

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

CITY MOTION: *Commissioner Vaillancourt moved, seconded by Commissioner Williams, to approve the agenda as posted.*

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Eric Payne, Executive Director of Central Urban Valley Institute, began with saying there may be some residents that would rather not release their names for the public record, out of fear of retaliation. He stated that it is a legal matter and that Fresno Housing can seek legal counsel on that subject. He felt overwhelmed by the death of George Floyd and the many other men and woman that have lost their lives. The historical actions of this administration requires us, in this moment, to pull back the curtains on the system we are dealing with. A system with a lack of organizational diversity and racist housing policies. Many would like to believe that this country has moved on from its racist past. At the Central Valley Urban Institute, they have always known that it has not. Hearing phrases, such as “defund the police”, for the first time may feel scary. There are times for moderation and times to push for systematic changes. This is the time to push for those systematic changes. He referred to the letter sent on August 6, 2019 requesting a public hearing to examine the Fresno Housing on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Almost a year later and they have yet to see anything come from it. The most egregious manifestation on institutionalized racism would be the Public and Private Real Estate policies. This would triage Black and Armenian families to substandard housing in Southwest Fresno. This is where Fresno Housing serves as the largest real estate holder. Today’s racial segregation in housing is entrenched, and that people of any race are unaware that system reforms are required. Right now, there is an opportunity to chip away at some of that structural racism and look at our budgets as value documents, and reinvest in people. To be able to move toward reform, there needs to be an acknowledgement of hurt and anger felt by communities of color. He quoted Fresno State Professor, Dr. Francine Oputa, in saying that “there is systemic racism that has worked in many ways for decades to keep Black and LatinX residents at the margins of education and economic systems in Fresno.” Until that racism is dealt with, true justice cannot be realized. The zip code in which you were raised does not determine our

destiny. Segregation is not an individual's fault but it is every person's responsibility. He ended with asking the Commissioners what changes they will make today.

Stacy Williams started by wanting to confirm that Preston Prince was not in attendance of this meeting. She stated that he is conveniently vacationing in the middle of a pandemic. When the agency, residents, and community needs his leadership the most, he is absent. Now, this board has to answer to the community for their negligence and demand they do their job. This intergovernmental agreement with the Fresno Housing Authority and the Fresno Police Department is nothing more than a "money grab" from the City of Fresno to the Fresno Housing Authority, she said. She stated that this is an effort of a pay to play for development projects. These projects have overly saturated communities of low-income housing and are plagued by the racist policies of redlining. She goes on to say that Mayor Brand, whose racist and anti-Black & brown policies, appointed Commissioner Terra Brusseau, the campaign manager of retired Police Chief and Mayor elect, Jerry Dyer, to the Housing Authority Board. All to push developers, like Brad Hardy, to get development contracts, throw money at Lee and Jerry's "pet projects" that she manages. She stated that Commissioner Brusseau has a known history of racist comments on this board and has yet to be held accountable by this body.

County Chair Sablan interrupted and concluded that the comment was referencing Agenda Item 6a and asked that her comments be made during that public comment section of the item. Ms. Williams then concluded her comments.

Sara Haze, long-term resident of Fresno, spoke on behalf of the community as a health researcher. She asked the board to focus on reinvesting in social programs that help our community. As a person who has studied homelessness and housing insecurity, she has started to feel an increase of concern in the direction that the Board is going. There needs to be reinvestment going back into the community. Back into the community where we put the most marginalized people at the top. As we go throughout this agenda, as we discuss the many things that are going to be affecting the most vulnerable, she asked the board to put them in the center of our board's work.

Leneesha Senegal shared her support of Fresno Housing. She asked the board to keep in mind the intended beneficiaries for all the programs provided. She stated that some programs lack any trickle down effects. Because of Covid-19, she has been able to see the income fragility that the residents are enduring from not having the same level of access to technology as everyone else. Fresno Housing facilities are a key tool for the residents to have and utilize. Residents need the type of technology to help residents competing in researching employment opportunities in the job market and residents with micro-enterprises. Considering that, she asked the Board to think about policies that support Section 3 outcomes, that any dollars that do trickle down, would indeed benefit the residents.

Rosemary Wanis submitted a written public comment as follows:

“I am Deaf and can’t use the microphone to express my comments, so I am typing my comment here. Can someone please read my comments aloud for the record? We agree with Mr. Payne’s comments that reinvestment needs to be done with the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf/Blind communities. The current system addresses and is designed for able-bodied individuals. We need to look at those who have access to the housing authority through American Sign Language. This includes providing training to housing authority staff on how to provide linguistically accessible services as well as cultural humility in working with members of the Deaf community, at large. This is a marginalized group and we ask to be brought to the table. This includes not asking our children to interpret.”

4. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no potential conflicts of interest presented at this time.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Consideration of the Minutes of May 26, 2020
- b. Consideration of the Contract for Replacement of Stairs at Maldonado Plaza
- c. Consideration of Acceptance of Award of Tax Credit Allocation – Barstow Commons
- d. Consideration of the Omnibus Resolutions – Chinatown
- e. Consideration of the Amendment to the No Place Like Home (NPLH) Resolution – Villages at Paragon

Commissioner Catalano asked to remove agenda item 5d for discussion.

City Chair Jones entered the meeting at 5:22 pm.

CITY MOTION: *Commissioner Yanez moved, seconded by Commissioner Vaillancourt to approve the consent agenda items 5a-c, & 5e.*

MOTION PASSED: 4-0

Commissioner Christensen was absent from the vote.

COUNTY MOTION: *Commissioner Fuentes moved, seconded by Commissioner Castro to approve the consent agenda items 5a-c & 5e.*

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

A discussion ensued on Consent Agenda Item 5D.

COUNTY MOTION: *Commissioner Gallaher moved, seconded by Commissioner Fuentes to approve the consent agenda item 5d.*

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

CITY MOTION: *Commissioner Vaillancourt moved, seconded by Commissioner Christensen to approve the consent agenda item 5d.*

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

6. INFORMATIONAL

a. Update on Inter-governmental Agreement with the Fresno Police Department

Tracewell Hanrahan, Deputy Executive Director, presented on this item.

Public Comment:

Suquaina Hussain, Outreach Director for the Counsel on American and Islamic relations in Central California, wanted to share the support of the demands that have been shared by the Central Valley Urban Institute. They are rooted with input from the most impacted community members. This gives the Board the opportunity to intentionally reflect on its priorities and ensure that Fresno Housing's budget puts people first. Budgets are a reflection of priorities, and they are demanding that the Fresno Housing prioritize people, not the increased investment of the targeting, punishing and policing of our communities of color. She emphasized that the commission should ensure that black community leaders and members are included in the decision making process, as they have been the target of the worst police violence, systemic racism, and exclusion for hundreds of years. The disparities in our communities and the lack of resources are backed by data and research. It is well known that systemic racism has manifested into a decreased quality of life, life expectancy, fewer mental health services, few healthy food options, and less funding in educational youth programs in communities of color. These are not new issues and are well-known to those that have experienced it. This budget needs to reflect prioritization of underserved communities and not further investment into police programs. She asked the board to not spend further funds towards police and allocate these funds to youth development programs, workforce development, and any additional Covid-19 recovery efforts.

Eric Payne, Central Valley Urban Institute, stated that they have undertaken an urgent public process of participatory budgeting with over 200 resident participants to solicit the input of Fresno Housing's residents on their priorities for the Fresno Housing Authority. We, along with the residents, are requesting \$1 million in new funding to workforce development, training, youth programming, tenant associations, and Covid-19 recovery fund. They believe that

the agency needs to redirect its focus in reinvesting in people. The agency has a responsibility because people are struggling to live, survive and thrive. We need to be investing in alternative forms of care, safety and emergency response. Instead, residents are met with lethal outcomes and disproportionate arrest in communities of color. Our communities are not warzones. They should be a place for individual opportunity. Instead, they are met with violent reaction by its own government and housing authority, and racist housing policies that are tied to lease agreements and evictions. The agency should develop a security plan with stakeholders, but instead they push through with a flawed process and a flawed contract.

Nourbese Flint, Executive Director of Black Woman for Wellness Action, stated that they are a state wide, reproductive justice organization that centers the health of black women and girls. One of the core components of reproductive justice is to be able to live in the world where you can raise a family with dignity and respect. Black families are constantly living under systemic and institutionalized racism that affects every aspect of their lives. These stressors cause harm to the emotional, mental, economic, physical and spiritual health, resulting in lower lifespans, hiding mental trauma and a lesser quality of life. Racism is the leading contributor to one of the core issues of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity. We are in a moment to reimagine what it looks like to have a system that benefits all of us, centers people in their humanity at the core of our work. We can start rebuilding a system that looks at public safety and emergency responses differently. She reiterated what Eric Payne mentioned earlier, where the Central Valley Urban Institute has interviewed 200 residents where they have already done the work of looking at what they see as priorities, in terms of a budget. Workforce training, youth programs, and Covid-19 Recovery aid, being some of the recommendations. She stated that because of this work, there is no need to go through a yearlong process to talk to the community when they have already expressed their wants and needs. They are looking for leaders that are willing to be bold and courageous into the reimagining what public safety looks like. They are looking for people trained and specialized in substance abuse, homelessness, and mental health services.

Kimberly McCoy, Project Director at Fresno Building Healthy Communities, agreed with Central Valley Urban Institute's comments. Playing basketball with kids occasionally or putting on events are not enough for what is needed for these communities. Statements like "defund the police" may seem scary but the police department receives 53% of the city's budget. That budget includes a contract with Fresno Unified School District, Fresno Housing and other agencies. It is time to invest in our communities and our residents - not police. Residents would like workforce development and other programs that would provide resources and job opportunities to them. As a community organizer by trade, and as someone who has spoken directly with residents of Southeast and Southwest Fresno, these things are the biggest priority on their list.

Kiel Lopez-Schmidt, experience in architectural and research on homelessness, wanted to speak to the commissioners regarding this issue. One thing that the board should remember is that they should not just listen to thoughts and opinions from the public, but to dig into the data that is presented from the Fresno Police Department. From what Kiel has dug into, there has been a severe lack of information about arrests, violent confrontations, who's been excluded from housing, and what are those processes like. In order to identify what the issues are that

the agency can solve, there must be an unwinding of the 30-year bond between Fresno Housing and the Fresno Police Department. On January 3, 2019 Fresno Police officers raided the Phoenix property and detained several individuals on suspicions of drug trafficking. Although there were no arrests made or evidence being found, a 17-year-old (London Wallace) was brutalized on video by the Fresno Police officer that is currently on the force. Although there may be good connections and relationships between police officers and Fresno Housing staff, they are still intertwined in a system that is ready to militarize and cause harm to the communities. He asked the board to start to evaluate that and request real data from the Fresno Police Department.

Marissa Moraza, representing Fresno Barrios Unidos and several youth and families that are Fresno Housing residents, wanted to echo the previous comment made to reimagine safety. She gave thanks to the Central Valley Urban Institute and the other agencies that have provided feedback from the community on how they no longer want investment into the Police. They would rather refocus those potential investments to the communities' needs. Workforce training, youth programs, tenant associations, and Covid-19 recovery funds would be the ideal designation for those potential funds. She asked the board to analyze if Fresno Housing is using the best tool for the intended outcomes. If Fresno Housing is focused on creating access to quality housing and to build vibrant communities, then she asked would this be able to be accomplished without the continued investment to the police department.

Marcel Woodruff, youth organizer, began with saying that although he does not live at any of current Fresno Housing properties, he has served by organizing youth through the music studio at Legacy Commons. He has heard stories about police officers playing and engaging with the youth and the community. On the other hand, some youth do not feel safe when police officers are around. This makes the youth unwilling to participate in those programs. He stated that this is a wonderful opportunity to look into the plan and recommendations made by Eric Payne, Central Valley Urban Institute, by reimagining public safety.

Cary Ayala (Email read by County Chair – SS) Writing to urge Fresno Housing Authority to sever ties with Fresno PD, who have a long and well-documented history of racism at the individual level in addition to the historic systemic racism of policing in general. It is deeply disturbing that a public agency caring for some of our most vulnerable residents would participate in and perpetuate policies and relationships based on a Racist War on Drugs that only exacerbated poverty and housing insecurity in Fresno and across the country. It is also disturbing that leadership either did not notice the problematic nature of these relationships, or did not care to change them. Divest from police and use funds to HELP people, not further criminalize poverty.

Commissioner Jones wanted to let the public and residents know that she is aware of everything being said about this item. None of it is lost on her. She believed that by having this contract as long as we have, that it was the right thing to do. The intended outcome was protecting the residents. These contracts would not have been executed if leadership believed they were not protecting the residents. She stated that they would continue to hear from the public in order to come together with a compromise that would benefit all.

Commissioner Williams acknowledged that no one, that has made a public comment, has stated that they reside in one of the Fresno Housing properties. She shared her experience with the Fresno Police department in the community. Although she acknowledged that everything being said is true, she is appreciative of the police department and the officer she has worked with. She asked the commissioners to evaluate whether getting rid of the contract now, and the security that it comes with, in order to think of another solution is the right thing. As an African-American woman, she felt safer observing police officers patrol the properties periodically. She stated that there are several programs that are already working on providing workforce training to residents and taking away this program would only take away the safety it provides to the community.

Commissioner Castro thanked and appreciated all of the public comments on this topic. It is important to hear from the new programs that work extensively in that area. She appreciated the comments Commissioner Williams made about her experience as a resident in the community. As a commissioner, she felt that there have been many programs to help empower and enrich the residents. She stated finding a balance on increasing those programs while keeping the safety of the Police department contract is key. The goal is to figure out what would work the best and make the residents feel safe, valued and supported.

Commissioner Henry echoed the sentiments made by the other commissioners. She was thrilled to know that City Chair Jones is on the Fresno Police Reform Committee. She is confident in Commissioner Jones as a representative of Fresno Housing. She has confidence that Commissioner Jones will take this role seriously and provide the empathy and love these communities need. She stated that it is important to disaggregate that data internally and turn it into contracts. There is a need to look at the proportionality and not just the numbers given by the data. Statements like “defund the police” do not necessarily mean eliminating police altogether, but to have the conversation around what police do and respond to. Mental health responses require a person that is skilled and experienced, specifically towards those matters being resolved. There would be push for the agency to provide residents with progress if there is some data to hold conversations on. She was eager to bring to light the DEI work that the agency has been working on. There has been some great work done with consultants and there is a need to expedite those conversations to the public.

Commissioner Yanez has stated that over the past few weeks, there has been more crime being committed near her residence in one of the Fresno Housing properties. She is worried about the safety of these communities without these contracts. She stated that she is against the call to remove this contract and the safety it brings to the residents. She acknowledged the importance of the bonds that have been made with the police officers assigned to the properties and kids they interact with in the community. These officers are not patrolling the community as a security guard. They are interacting with residents and checking on their well-being. A lack of officers in the community would greenlight criminal activity and decrease public safety. She mentioned how some comments were being made that this money could be redirected to workforce, and she points out that there are other companies that specialize and have programs specifically for this issue.

Commissioner Catalano thanked the interpreters for providing a necessary communication tool. He also showed his appreciation to the resident-commissioners that have spoken out on their personal experience, living in these communities. He thanked them for their honesty and insight. There is a misconception on what this contract provides the residents. As the agency does outreach, he asked the boards to open the dialog and educate the community about the partnership with Fresno Housing. He is excited to hear the feedback given by the 200 residents. He stated it is important to show the community how much is being spent on resident engagement and enhancement. He asked staff to discuss more about the contract being provided. He clarified that this contract provides two assigned officers for the properties and it is not a random rotation. He will remain open to the conversation in the coming months.

Commissioner Fuentes has listened to the public comment and believed that what is being said makes sense. As a former victim of police brutality, he does not hold every other officer for the actions of an individual. He stated that if there were a situation to arise with his family, he would not want to call a counselor but rather the police. Security is the most important benefit of keeping this 30 year contract.

Commissioner Vaillancourt thanked the great comments being said by commissioners and the public. She appreciated being able to hold these conversations and hearing all of the perspectives. She thanked staff for not coming into this meeting with answers but with an invitation to open the dialog and listen to the input being provided.

b. Overview of 2019 Mixed Finance Financial Results

Emily De La Guerra, Director of Finance and Accounting, presented on this item.

c. Real Estate Development Pipeline Overview

Michael Duarte, Director of Planning and Community Development, presented on this item.

7. ACTION

a. Consideration of Funding Application Submission – Mendota Farm Labor

CITY MOTION: *Commissioner Yanez moved, seconded by Commissioner Vaillancourt to approve the Funding Application Submission – Mendota Farm Labor.*

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

COUNTY MOTION: *Commissioner Fuentes moved, seconded by Commissioner Catalano to approve the Funding Application Submission – Mendota Farm Labor.*

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

b. Consideration of Funding Application Submission – Blackstone and Simpson

CITY MOTION: *Commissioner Yanez moved, seconded by Commissioner Vaillancourt to approve the Funding Application Submission – Blackstone and Simpson.*

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

COUNTY MOTION: *Commissioner Fuentes moved, seconded by Commissioner Catalano to approve the Funding Application Submission – Blackstone and Simpson.*

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

c. County: Consideration of the Amended Bylaws

COUNTY MOTION: *Commissioner Catalano moved, seconded by Commissioner Gallaher to approve the Amended Bylaws.*

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

d. City: Consideration of the Amended Bylaws

CITY MOTION: *Commissioner Vaillancourt moved, seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve the Amended Bylaws.*

MOTION PASSED: 5-0

8. COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

Commissioner Jones announced that there are several letters on the NAHRO action alert center for the Commissioners to sign. One is encouraging the Senate to prioritize T-HUD and another encouraging Congress to include HUD funding and additional funding legislation that is currently being considered. She asked the Commissioners to sign the two letters before July 1, 2020.

Commissioner Catalano announced and congratulated Commissioner Jones on her appointment to the City's Police Reform Advisory Board.

9. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Promotions:
 - o Aysha Hills, Human Resources Manager (promoted from Senior Human Resources Analyst)
 - o Lucille Kirchman, Accounting Manager (promoted from Senior Accountant)
 - o Arlene Wood, Accounting Manager (promoted from Senior Accountant)
 - o Samuel Zamora, Property Specialist II (promoted from Maintenance Technician)
 - o Fidel Contreras, Communications Project Manager (promoted from Communications Coordinator)
 - o Tracy Navarro, Senior Manager – Property Management (promoted from District Manager)

10. CLOSED SESSION

The Boards of Commissioners entered closed session at approximately 7:06 pm.

a. CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATORS

(Pursuant to Government Code § 54954.5(b))

Property: N. Chestnut Avenue/E. Alluvial Avenue, Fresno, CA 93720 (APN: 404-071-50)

Agency negotiator: Preston Prince

Negotiating parties: Susan Brosi, Louis Brosi, Jr., and Housing Authority of the City of Fresno

Under negotiation: Price and Terms

11. REPORT ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

The Boards of Commissioners returned to open session at approximately 7:38 pm.

County Chair Sablan stated that there was no action to report from Closed Session.

12. ACTION

- a. Consideration Purchase and Sale Agreement – Alluvial and Chestnut Avenues

CITY MOTION: *Commissioner Yanez moved, seconded by Commissioner Vaillancourt to approve the Purchase and Sale Agreement – Alluvial and Chestnut Avenues.*

MOTION PASSED: 4-0

Commissioner Williams was absent from the vote.

COUNTY MOTION: *Commissioner Fuentes moved, seconded by Commissioner Castro to approve the Purchase and Sale Agreement – Alluvial and Chestnut Avenues.*

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

13. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be considered by the Boards of Commissioners for the Housing Authorities of the City and County of Fresno, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:41 p.m.



Preston Prince, Secretary to the Boards of Commissioners