

# HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF CAMDEN

## VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Camden (HACC) met for a Virtual Regular Meeting on Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at 5:31 PM, E.S.T.

Mr. Victor Figueroa gave instructions and rules for participating in the virtual meeting in English and in Spanish. Commissioner Deborah Person-Polk welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Chuck Valentine began the meeting with an invocation, a moment of silence and prayer for Laverne Williams, and a Pledge of Allegiance to the flag at 5:38 PM, E.S.T.

Those present were as follows:

Present: Commissioner Alesha Figueroa-Falcon  
Commissioner Cameron Hudson  
Commissioner Nohemi Soria-Perez  
Commissioner Alan Miller  
Commissioner Deborah Person-Polk

In Attendance: Victor D. Figueroa, Executive Director  
Chuck Valentine, Director of Modernization  
Cristal Holmes-Bowie, Esq. of Michael A. Armstrong & Associates, LLC  
Sadyhe Bradley, General Counsel  
Charles Valentine, Director of Modernization  
Melody Johnson-Williams, Director of HCV Program  
Wanda Riley, Asset Manager  
Dwayne Tucker, Interim Finance Director  
William Spearman, Operations Manager  
John Kostyal, Human Resources Manager  
Jasmine Kee, Purchasing Specialist  
Rosie F. Brown, Executive Assistant  
Nathyya Soto, Executive Secretary  
Dorixe De Jesus, Executive Secretary Assistant  
Michael Dugger, ALP Administrator  
Lakita Frederick, Property Manager (Senior High-rises)  
Leslie Fisher, Management Assistant  
Geraldine Taylor, Property Manager (Ablett Village)  
Melissa Ruiz, Assistant Property Manager (Senior High-rises)  
Marquell Tate, Assistant Manager (Pennrose)  
Naimah Holmes, Michael's Organization  
Rhonda Wardlow-Hurley, HACC  
Carol Brummel  
J. Allen  
Naomi Williams

**CALL TO ORDER**

Cristal Holmes-Bowie, Esq., of Michael A. Armstrong & Associates, LLC., stated that Virtual Regular Meeting of the Housing Authority of the City of Camden Board of Commissioners for Wednesday, January 19, 2022, was held in accordance with the Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975. Adequate notice was properly given in the appropriate places and to the appropriate personnel as required by law. The meeting was called to order.

Commissioner Person-Polk: Roll Call.

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Alesha Figueroa-Falcon	Present
	Commissioner Deborah Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Cameron Hudson	Present
	Commissioner Alan Miller	Here
	Commissioner Nohemi Soria-Perez	Present
	Commissioner Deborah Person-Polk	Present

Mr. Figueroa stated that there was a quorum.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Ms. Holmes-Bowie entertained a nomination for Chairperson from the floor. Commission Hudson nominated Deborah Person-Polk for Chair. Ms. Holmes-Bowie asked for other nominations. Seeing none, she asked for a Motion to close the nominations for Chair. Motioned and seconded.

Ms. Holmes-Bowie, Esq.: Roll Call.  
1) Motion – Commissioner Hudson  
2) Seconded – Commissioner Soria-Perez  
3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Yes
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Yes
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

Congratulations were given to Commissioner Person-Polk, and she gave thanks back to the group.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked for nominations for the Vice Chair. Commissioner Hudson nominated Commissioner Nohemi Soria-Perez for Vice-Chair. Commissioner Person-Polk seconded it. Commissioner Person-Polk asked for other nominations. None. Asked to entertain a motion for Nohemi Soria-Perez for Vice-Chair.

Commission Person-Polk.: Roll Call.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Hudson
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Yes
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Yes
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

Congratulations were given to Commissioner Soria-Perez, and she gave thanks back to the group.

Commissioner Person-Polk introduced Commissioner Alesha Figueroa-Falcon. Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon thanked everyone, appreciated everyone's faith in her, and stated she hoped to live up to expectations if not surpass them.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Person-Polk asked for approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, and if there were any questions.

Commissioner Miller asked about the accounting of the CARES Act expenditures and stated he had not received the accounting from Mr. Tucker or Mr. Figueroa. Mr. Figueroa stated they could submit that in writing.

Commissioner Miller asked the solicitor under Resolution 21-76, he had asked a question, and Mr. Valentine had provided an "answer in detail." Commissioner Miller asked if an "answer in detail" was sufficient because that didn't make the record that he was looking to make. He likes the answers in writing, memorialized as to question and answer.

Ms. Holmes-Bowie stated that there was no requirement that minutes be verbatim unless the board chooses to have verbatim minutes. She stated these minutes go above and beyond what is required for minutes. Minutes typically give structure to the information provided for the public. Minutes can be amended and supplemented if desired. All meetings are recorded and maintained. She stated it would be up to the board to amend the minutes if needed. Commissioner Miller could make a motion to amend it, and the board would have to vote on how minutes are prepared as long as they generally reflect the meeting. She could provide resources for preparing minutes but stated she thought there was far more information provided than she believes should be provided.

Commissioner Miller stated perhaps it was his background from other public entities, land use boards, and other types of public boards that other solicitors suggest that making a record is one of the utmost responsibilities of any public board member – reflecting both actions, questions, and answers – so the public can review it and there's a record of votes, reasons, and actions that a board

takes. In his 30-year experience, he prefers making a record and having it available to the public, which indemnifies from any questions from the public on a board's specific actions.

Commissioner Person-Polk stated that the recordings were available for review if there were any questions, so she agrees to go along with the solicitor.

Ms. Holmes-Bowie stated that she's also served on other municipal boards and had the same discussion regarding minutes being closer to verbatim to have a clear record. She stated that minutes can be amended if needed by vote. She also stated that as long as there was a recording and the minutes being voted on, it wouldn't be an issue for public questioning or possible litigation. She said she knows some boards hire a court reporter, but their situation does not require that.

Commissioner Miller stated he wanted the public to be satisfied with the information presented and that he himself would like to see more detail, and he would make a motion in that regard. He wanted to make sure the Board was indemnified and that there was total transparency between the Board's actions and the public. Commissioner Person-Polk stated that they did operate in transparency and that everything was being disclosed. She asked Commissioner Miller if he had any more questions. He stated that he would like the resolution to reflect the detail that the minutes said were "provided" but wasn't provided in the minutes. Mr. Figueroa stated that they had the original transcripts, the audio, and then the shortened minutes – an abbreviated version of the transcripts. Mr. Miller asked for amended minutes on that resolution, which would be provided to him.

Ms. Holmes-Bowie asked if the Board wanted to table the minutes till the next meeting so that the details could be reflected in the minutes and be voted on at that time. Mr. Figueroa stated that it could be included once they had the official hard copies of everything if the Board chose to and voted to have it included. Ms. Holmes-Bowie stated that it should be tabled till next meeting. They discussed whether to approve the minutes without Resolution 21-76 or hold them till next meeting.

Entertain a Motion to table minutes.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Person-Polk
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Hudson
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Abstain
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Yes to table
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

Mr. Figueroa stated that the minutes were tabled. He asked to vote on Caucus minutes. Ms. Holmes-Bowie stated that there were not enough commissioners present at the time who were able to vote.

**REVIEW OF CAUCUS MINUTES**

Entertain a Motion to accept Caucus minutes for Wednesday, December 15, 2021.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Hudson
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Abstain
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Yes
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

**OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Figueroa stated that he had no Old Business at this time.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Figueroa wished everyone a Happy New Year and welcomed Commissioner Alesha Figueroa-Falcon. Stated that all three-high rises were provided vaccines, boosters, and testing for COVID-19 for seniors and family sites as needed. He also stated that they had gone to a hybrid telework schedule until further notice.

He stated that the commissioners and staff should have received the Choice Neighborhoods' News & Update prepared by Chuck Valentine, the Choice Coordinator, and his staff at the Mod Department. He thanked Sherry Holt for her efforts in the newsletter with resources, links, and pictures of what's going on at Choice.

He received a letter on December 15, 2021, from HUD Newark Field Office approving the annual PHA plan for the Camden Housing Authority for Fiscal Year January 1, 2022, and thanked everyone involved with that, specifically Wanda Riley and her staff.

He announced that he received a letter from Nan McKay that Lakita Frederick, Manager, Senior Towers, had passed the RAD PBV, Project-based voucher, Specialist Certification Examination and congratulated her.

He also announced that the 43 Emergency Housing Vouchers were being processed, and that the public could only apply to get the vouchers through the Southern New Jersey Continuum of Care or COC of which the Center for Family Services is one of the members. The waiting list was closed at this time because they received over 300 applications. If other housing authorities don't use all their vouchers, HUD would release additional vouchers, and HACC might be able to get more for their local area.

He also announced the loss of Ms. Laverne Williams who was a long-time advocate of the HACC and long-time resident and read a proclamation in memory of Ms. Laverne Williams.

"WHEREAS Ms. Laverne Williams was supportive and instrumental to the efforts of the Housing Authority City of Camden and WHEREAS Ms. Laverne Williams was a resident of Clement T. Branch Village for over 20 years and served as President of the Branch Village Resident Association for many years as well, performing her duties steadfastly with the goal always of making the Housing Authority a place that the residents could be proud of. And WHEREAS Ms. Laverne Williams served the Branch Village residents tirelessly, going beyond the call of duty, regularly attending the monthly HACC Board Commissioner meetings, asking questions, addressing concerns on behalf of all HACC residents, and ensuring overall best practices were made for the agency. And WHEREAS Ms. Laverne Williams was committed to her role as a lifelong public housing advocate, educating herself along the way of the United States Housing and Urban Development housing practices and new initiatives to better assist the Housing Authority City of Camden residents. And WHEREAS she often challenged the HACC leadership and Board of Commissioners but doing so as a strong and relentless voice of responsibility and communication envoy to the Housing Authority residents. NOW THEREFORE, the Housing Authority City of Camden Board of Commissioners, administration, and staff do hereby recognize Ms. Laverne Williams' committed service she gave to the Housing Authority in her time as a resident and president of the Branch Village Resident Association." Signed by Victor Figueroa and Deborah Person-Polk, Chairwoman of the Housing Authority City of Camden on behalf of the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, the Housing Authority, and all concerned.

Mr. Figueroa stated that although Ms. Williams was very present and very vocal, she did it for the residents that she represented. Commissioner Person-Polk stated that she wanted all of the commissioners' names added to the bottom, to include them on the Proclamation, because she wore everyone out and that Ms. Williams would be sorely missed.

Mr. Miller stated that Ms. Williams "is," not was, a special person. He stated too frequently people are recognized after passing for the good work that they do, and this was one of those cases. Even though she was adversarial, it was from the heart. He asked the Authority to consider planting a strong tree to reflect her inner and exterior strength at Branch Village, and placing a plaque there dedicated to Ms. Williams and her commitment to the residents of Branch Village and the Housing Authority.

Mr. Miller questioned the ALP program. He was at its inception, said it was tremendous, and had watched the ups and downs of how many people took advantage of it. We're now working with Rutgers to increase the numbers. He asked what is the strategic plan to increase the numbers? If not, why not?

Mr. Figueroa stated there was a plan, and it would be provided to Commissioner Miller and to the Board. He stated it was being updated, including the Operations Manager, Mr. William Spearman, and Mr. Mike Dugger, ALP Administrator (recently full time), and in conjunction with Nancy Cresse, the Director of Nursing at Rutgers, to include other ideas.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the commissioners on the Executive Director's Report.

Commissioner Hudson welcomed Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon to the Board and mentioned her dedication to the Resident Board Association, and he thanked Mayor Carstarphen and City Council for putting her on the Board. He commented that Ms. Williams was always present and made sure her voice was heard and represented the people who didn't have a voice. He confirmed that something should be done to commemorate her and her work in public housing. Commissioner Person-Polk agreed and stated they could probably do the tree.

Entertained a Motion to accept the Executive Director's Report.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Hudson
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Abstain
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Yes
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

### NEW BUSINESS

#### RESOLUTIONS:

**Resolution 22-01** – Dwayne Tucker, Interim Finance Director. Resolution 22-01 is a resolution approving the Housing Authority of the City of Camden payment registers for the month of December 2021. He stated the general fund had expenditures of \$923,159.38 and the Housing Choice Voucher Program had expenditures of \$1,375,945.08.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the public. Mr. Figueroa stated there were no questions.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions on Resolution 22-01, from the Commissioners. None.

Entertained a Motion to accept Resolution 22-01.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Hudson
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Yes
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Yes
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

**Resolution 22-03** – Commissioner Person-Polk. Resolution 22-03 is a resolution authorizing a Closed Session of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners on Wednesday, January 19, 2022.

Entertained a Motion to go into Closed Session.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Yes
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Yes
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

Mr. Figueroa stated that they were now in Closed Session.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Commissioner Person-Polk asked to entertain a motion to come out of Close.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Hudson
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Yes
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Yes
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

Mr. Figueroa stated out of Closed Session at 6:37 PM.

**Resolution 22-04** – Ms. Jasmine Kee. Procurement Specialist. Resolution 22-04 authorizing a contract for Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and Rent Reasonableness Inspections. An expenditure of funds in an amount not to exceed \$22,000 and authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to execute documents and to do all things necessary to effectuate the transaction(s).

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the public on Resolution 22-04, from the public or the Commissioners. None

Entertain a Motion to accept Resolution 22-04.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Hudson
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:



Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Yes
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Yes
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the commissioners. Commissioner Miller asked who is doing the work, what is the not-to-exceed amount, and is the work done in person. Ms. Kee responded by stating the not-to-exceed amount is currently \$22,000, and McCright & Associates, LLC. is doing the work.

**Resolution 22-05** – Dwayne Tucker, Interim Director. Resolution 22-05 is a resolution approving the transaction, ratifying the annual operating budgets for the Asset Management Properties (AMP), the Central Office Cost Center (COCC) and Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) for Fiscal Year 2022, and authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to execute documents and to do all things necessary to effectuate the submission.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the public on Resolution 22-05, from the public or the Commissioners. None

Commissioner Miller stated that he had an issue with the travel, training was low, and travel was too high. Commissioner Polk thanked Victor and Dwayne and the rest of the team for an excellent budget. Commissioner Hudson thanked Madam Chair for the comment. Commissioner Soria-Perez thanked the Executive Director for this extremely thorough and fiscally responsible budget.

Entertain a Motion to accept Resolution 22-05.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Hudson
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Yes
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	No
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

**Walk-on Resolution:**

**Resolution 22-06 – Rosie F. Brown, Executive Assistant.** Resolution 22-06 is a resolution approving the transaction, authorizing applications for grants for FY-2022 for federal and non-federal grants, and authorizing the Executive Director, or his designee, to execute documents and to do all things necessary to effectuate the transaction(s).

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any questions from the public on Resolution 22-06, from the public or the Commissioners. None

Entertain a Motion to accept Resolution 22-06.

- 1) Motion – Commissioner Figueroa -Falcon
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Hudson
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Yes
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Yes
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Naomi Williams, asked about Section 8 checks and spoke to the life of Ms. Laverne Williams. Melody Johnson-Williams responded to her, stating until the money is in the bank from HUD, the HACC cannot send out their checks.

Commissioner Person-Polk asked if there were any other questions from the public. None. She asked to entertain a Motion to Adjourn.

Entertained a Motion to Adjourn.

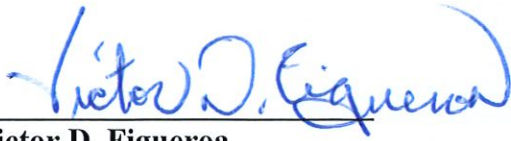
- 1) Motion – Commissioner Soria-Perez
- 2) Seconded – Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon
- 3) Moved and seconded. Roll Call:

Mr. Figueroa:	Commissioner Figueroa-Falcon	Yes
	Commissioner Keys Frazier	Absent
	Commissioner Hudson	Yes
	Commissioner Miller	Yes
	Commissioner Soria-Perez	Yes
	Commissioner Person-Polk	Yes

**ADJOURNMENT: 6:58 PM**

**Attested to this 19<sup>th</sup> day of January 2022.**

**ATTEST:**



**Victor D. Figueroa**  
**Executive Director**

**APPROVAL:**



**Deborah Person Polk, Chairwoman**  
**Board of Commissioners**