

COUNCIL ON HOUSING  
Public Session via Conference Call  
April 8, 2020

**Motions**

- March 11, 2020 Minutes

Mr. White, Chair, called to order the public session of the Council on Housing meeting at 2:04 pm, April 8, 2020. In addition to Mr. White, the following Council members were present:

Dianne W. Casey	Francis Julian	Connie Harrington	Corrine Massey
Donna Mitchell	Doug Motley	Norma Zumsteg	

The following council members were absent and excused from the meeting:

Garrett Grier

Also attending:

Anas Ben Addi, Director of Delaware State Housing Authority, DSHA  
Jonathan Adkins-Taswell, Planner III, DSHA  
Shanná L. Alicea, Administrative Assistant III, DSHA  
Susan Eliason, Director of Housing Development, DSHA  
Marlena Gibson, Director of Policy and Planning, DSHA

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Casey moved and Ms. Massey seconded that the Minutes of March 11, 2020 meeting be approved.

**DSHA REPORT** Mr. Ben Addi

- **Budget**
  - All expected increases in funding have been put on hold because of the Coronavirus pandemic.
  - There will be a decrease in the revenue for two reasons:
    - Scheduled State income tax filing has been pushed back to July 15<sup>th</sup> which will lead to a delay in incoming revenue.
    - The economy has been affected financially because of the COVID-19 crisis.
  - There have been a few stimulus bills that have been passed into law and will fund some of the programs related to DSHA.
    - Increase in funding to the ESG, CBDG, HOPWA programs with an estimated combine increase of \$6.5 million going out to the different jurisdictions: Dover, City of Wilmington, New Castle and DSHA.
  - There will be an additional funding that will be allocated to the different States, with Delaware receiving the minimum of \$1.25 billion. This will represent a reimbursement mechanism for expenses not budgeted for and due to the COVID-19 crisis. Hopefully with this funding DSHA will be able to fund some of the new initiatives and hopefully use this funding to supplement the loss in revenue that will impact DSHA's next fiscal year funding.

- DSHA is still open for business but with about 25%-30% of its employees coming to the office on different sites and the majority of employees are working remotely with some rotating shifts when possible.
- DSHA has made some of the following adjustments because of the crisis:
  - 100 % Electronic signature with the exception of legal documents or other documentation that cannot be sign electronically.
  - Majority of the inspections are being done via video remote, e.g. SRAP and Section 8.
  - Some of the reviews on the tax credit and other sites are being done via desk reviews.
- The following funding round due dates have been extended or modified:
  - LIHTC still due April 30<sup>th</sup>, however only the main part of the application will be due with the rest of the required information coming in, May 29<sup>th</sup>.
  - Strong Neighborhood due date was May 8<sup>th</sup>, but at the request of the applicants it also has been extended.
  - Housing Trust Fund applications has been extended to June 26<sup>th</sup>
  - DSHA and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh are in the middle of discussing expediting the process and do things a little differently for the Home4Good program, to supplement some of the emergency rent assistance that has already been put in place.
- On March 26<sup>th</sup>, DSHA's Policy and Planning Committee created a new program, the Delaware Housing Assistance Program (DE HAP), an emergency rental assistance program. Since the program has been announced to the public on social media, within 24 hours DSHA had received approximately 800 emails in response to this much needed program. As of today, April 8<sup>th</sup>, DSHA has received approximately 5000-6000 emails. Half of these inquires are actual applications which DSHA's staff will review and dispatch to the different partnering agencies who will then contact the applicants to verify information. If applicants are eligible, DSHA will then pay the fee to their landlords or utility companies. The agencies which did the verifications of the applicants' information will receive a per application processing fee.

DSHA has committed \$2 million from the HDF fund to the program and if the program is officially approved by Council, will start disbursing the funds today. New Castle County has also committed \$500,000 and Sussex has committed \$250,000 to supplement the DE HAP program.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- **COMMUNICATIONS**: Ms. Casey
  - None
- **HOUSING POLICY**: Mr. Taswell & Ms. Gibson
  - Mr. Taswell stated the following matters were reviewed and discussed:
    - How the State is being affected by the COVID-19 crisis
    - Discussion on preparing for the after effects of the COVID-19, what housing may look like, and what steps to take
    - Homelessness prevention
  - Ms. Gibson talked briefly on the updates of homelessness work in regards to articles in the News Journal on DSHA's contribution to the prevention of homelessness.

DSHA participation with DSAMH and Division of State Service Centers which operate the motel voucher program. This program reaches out to targeted individuals that are primarily unsheltered, but may be high risk, to help get them into non-congregate settings, basically motels. There are also wrap around services to help them stay stable.

- Ms. Gibson also mentioned there has been a lot of work going on and coordinating with Continuum of Care, Housing Alliance DE, DSHA, and FEMA on some of the resources that are available and figuring out what can support what, moving forward, and aligning those resources Statewide, making sure there is coverage.
- OPERATIONS: Ms. Harrington  
None
- LOAN REVIEW: Mr. Julian

The committee met March 31, 2020 and reviewed one HDF grant request. After due discussion, Loan Review made the following recommendation to the Council:

- o Delaware Housing Assistance Program - **Resolution #605**. Mr. Julian moved and Ms. Casey seconded that the resolution be approved. The motion passed with one abstention by Ms. Harrington.

**OLD / NEW BUSINESS:**

- o None

**ADMINISTRATIVE:**

- o None

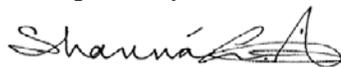
**SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May13, 2020. Conference call from 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Shanná L. Alicea

Note: Copies of materials referenced as “attached” in these Minutes are available upon request.