

PASADENA RENTAL HOUSING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 13, 2023 – 6:00 P.M.
ROBINSON PARK RECREATION CENTER, MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
TELECONFERENCE LOCATION: ASILOMAR CONFERENCE GROUNDS,
800 ASILOMAR AVENUE, PACIFIC GROVE, CA 93950

OPENING Vice Chair Lamar called the meeting of the Pasadena Rental Housing Board to order at 6:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Chair Ryan Bell – Participating via Teleconference
Vice Chair Brandon Lamar
Board Member Deborah Dunlop
Board Member Lourdes Gonzalez
Board Member Allison Henry
Board Member Emanuel Najera
Board Member Barbara Pitts
Board Member Dianne Romero Chavez
Board Member Arnold Siegel (Absent)
Board Member Yaneli Soriano Santiago
Board Member Adela Torres
Alternate Board Member Peter Dreier (At-Large)
Alternate Board Member Aaron Markowitz (Tenant)

Staff: Karen Tiedemann, Goldfarb Lipmann Attorney
Agnes Cho, bhyv Consulting
Nazanin Salehi, Goldfarb Lipmann Attorney-Via Zoom
Desiree Acosta, Recording Secretary

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA Dennis Jebbia, Pasadena resident, provided comments and concerns on Regarding Resolution No. RHB 2023-03.

Michelle White, Pasadena resident, stated her concerns regarding ad hoc committee meetings not being open to the public and urged the Board to have these meetings comply with the Brown Act to allow the public to attend and give input.

Member Romero Chavez arrived at 6:06 p.m.

Laurence O'Brien, Pasadena resident, provided information on his specific tenant issue, stating that the actions are equivalent to landlord harassment.

Adam Bray-Ali, Pasadena resident, spoke on the Board's contract with bhyv consulting, and expressed concerns with consulting firm's qualifications and the Board's actions to approve.

Vice Chair Lamar introduced Agnes Cho, senior consultant with bhyv, and gave a brief review of her qualifications and experience.

OLD BUSINESS

ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION OF THE PASADENA RENTAL HOUSING BOARD APPROVING A TERM SHEET TO BE PROVIDED TO THE CITY OF PASADENA RELATED TO INTEGRATING THE PASADENA RENTAL HOUSING BOARD AS A CITY DEPARTMENT

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Pasadena Rental Housing Board approve the following:

- (1) Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (common sense exemption);
- (2) Adopt a Resolution of the Pasadena Rental Housing Board Approving a Term Sheet to be Presented to the City of Pasadena Related to Integrating the Rental Housing Board as a City Department; and
- (3) Authorize the Pasadena Rental Housing Board Chair and Vice Chair to engage in discussions with City staff regarding the Term Sheet and other matters related to integrating the Rental Housing Board as a City Department.

Vice Chair Lamar introduced Karen Tiedemann, legal counsel to the PRHB, who summarized the item as part of a PowerPoint presentation, reviewing the details of the "term sheet", as discussed and submitted by the Foundations/Structure ad hoc committee for the Board's consideration, which serves as an initial request/wish list from the Board to the City as part of the PRHB's request to integrate with the City as a Department.

Board Members Romero Chavez and Henry requested additional language be added to Staff Recommendation No. 3 to require/clarify that the Chair and Vice Chair must return with the negotiated Term Sheet regarding the Board's integration with the City as a Department for the Board's consideration and action.

Michelle White, Pasadena resident, stated her concerns regarding the PRHB's integration request to become a City department, citing the difficulty the Board may encounter in getting its budget adopted by the City Council.

Following discussion, it was moved by Board Member Dreier, seconded by Board Member Soriano Santiago, to approve the staff recommendation, amended to require that following negotiations with City staff, the final decision on the Term Sheet will return to the Board for approval.

AYES: Board Members Dunlop, Gonzalez, Henry, Najera, Pitts, Romero Chavez, Soriano Santiago, Torres, Vice Chair Lamar, Chair Bell, Alternate Member Dreier
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Member Siegel

NEW BUSINESS

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION OF THE PASADENA RENTAL HOUSING BOARD ADOPTING RULES OF CONDUCT FOR RENTAL HOUSING BOARD MEETINGS AND RENTAL HOUSING BOARD MEMBER COMPENSATION

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Pasadena Rental Housing Board approve the following:

- (1) Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (common sense exemption); and
- (2) Adopt a resolution of the Pasadena Rental Housing Board adopting the Rules of Conduct for Rental Housing Board Meetings and Rental Housing Board Member Compensation.

Vice Chair Lamar introduced Karen Tiedemann, legal counsel to the PRHB, who summarized the item as part of a PowerPoint presentation related to rules of conduct for PRHB meetings, as well as Board Member compensation.

Discussion ensued regarding Board Member compensation, including questions related to the additional time spent by members in the performance of the duties.

Michelle White, Pasadena resident, spoke on provisions of the resolution, and inquired about the timing of when ad hoc committees might become standing committees whose meetings would then be open to the public.

Following discussion, it was moved by Board Member Gonzalez, seconded by Board Member Dunlop, to approve the staff recommendation.

AYES: Board Members Dunlop, Gonzalez, Henry, Najera, Pitts, Romero Chavez, Soriano Santiago, Torres, Vice Chair Lamar, Chair Bell, Alternate Member Dreier

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Member Siegel

APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO ATTORNEY SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH GOLDFARB & LIPMAN, LLP, TO INCREASE THE BUDGET BY \$175,000 FOR A CUMULATIVE AMOUNT NOT-TO-EXCEED \$225,000

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Pasadena Rental Housing Board approve the following:

- (1) Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (common sense exemption);
- (2) Authorize the Chair, acting on behalf of the Board, to execute an amendment to the Attorney Services Agreement ("Agreement") previously authorized by the Board's action dated June 7, 2023, with Goldfarb & Lipman, LLP ("Goldfarb"), to provide interim legal services related to the implementation of Charter Article 18, the Pasadena Fair and Equitable Housing Charter Amendment, increasing the amount by \$175,000, for a cumulative amount not-to-exceed \$225,000;
- (3) To the extent the proposed action is subject to the Competitive Selection Process, grant the contract an exemption pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC), Section 4.08.049(B), contracts for which the City's best interests are served. Competitive price bidding is not required pursuant to City Charter Section 1002(F), contracts for professional or unique services; and
- (4) Amend the Board's Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Operating Budget by appropriating an additional \$175,000 in the Pasadena Rental Housing Board Fund (689) for said services.

Vice Chair Lamar introduced the item, and Chair Bell presented information on the proposed action to amend the contract with Goldfarb & Lipman, LLP, to increase the contract amount by \$175,000, for a total not to exceed not-to-exceed amount of \$225,000, explained the purpose of the contract amendment, and responded to questions. Chair Bell also noted that following the Board's action, it is likely that this item would then proceed to the City Council for their consideration and approval.

Board Counsel Karen Tiedemann provided a brief description of her role as Board Legal Counsel, and provided professional background information.

Member Najera reiterated his request that future contracts related to legal counsel to the PRHB be part of a Request for Proposal process.

Following questions and discussion, it was moved by Board Member Najera, seconded by Board Member Henry, to approve the item above:

AYES: Board Members Dunlop, Gonzalez, Henry, Najera, Pitts, Romero Chavez, Soriano Santiago, Torres, Vice Chair Lamar, Chair Bell, Alternate Member Dreier
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Member Siegel

**INFORMATIONAL
ITEMS**

**PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED DRAFT WORK PLAN FOR THE
PASADENA RENTAL HOUSING BOARD**

Recommendation: This presentation is provided for information only; no action is required at this time.

Vice Chair Lamar introduced the item, and Board Counsel Tiedemann reviewed the Draft Work Plan document as part of an oral presentation, noting the high priority topics to be discussed at upcoming PRHB meetings: staffing plan, Board training manual, stakeholder engagement workshops for tenants and landlords, relocation assistance regulations, Board rules and regulations for the conduct of meetings, update on the integration plan with the City, setting up the rental registry, preparing a staffing plan and budget, establish the first rental housing fee, regulations on owner move-in and substantial rehabilitation tenant terminations, and tenant buy-out regulations, and responded to questions.

Chair Bell also pointed out the Draft Work Plan has the current list of upcoming PRHB meeting dates, and commended Board Counsel Tiedemann for her work on behalf of the Board.

Following questions related to the upcoming meeting schedule, on order of the Vice Chair, and by consensus of the Board, the information was received and filed.

**PRESENTATION ON SECURITY DEPOSIT INTEREST RATE
REGULATIONS**

Recommendation: This presentation is provided for information only; no action is required at this time.

Vice Chair Lamar introduced the item, and Board Counsel Tiedemann summarized the item as part of a Power Point presentation, noting an action to set the Security Deposit Interest Rate would be on the PRHB's next agenda, and responded to questions.

Discussion ensued regarding state law related to security deposits, process and timing for returning security deposits, effective date of the interest rate provisions for security deposits (January 1, 2024), process for setting the interest rate, and selection of the banks in Pasadena used to determine the rate.

Following questions related to the upcoming meeting schedule, on order of the Vice Chair, and by consensus of the Board, the information was received and filed.

AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. STAFFING

B. FOUNDATIONS/STRUCTURE

C. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

D. POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Vice Chair Lamar noted that there was no new reports related to the Foundations/Structure ad hoc committee. Board Member Gonzalez stated that the Staffing ad hoc committee had nothing to report at this time.

Board Member Henry reported on the work of the Community Outreach ad hoc committee, including updates on responses to Rent Mail emails being handled by bhyv consultants, with the following information:

- 135 emails received, with 33 remaining unanswered
- Email topics/questions/issues include: exemptions from Measure H, allowable rent increases, evictions, requests for forms, rent rollback procedures, relocation assistance, and harassment issues
- Weekly email averages are 45-60 emails per week
- Average email requires approximately 30 minutes of staff time to research and respond; approximately 1 to 2 days to be sent out
- A full-time housing counselor needed to handle emails and phone calls
- Necessary to procure resources to access ownership information

Member Henry also provided information on work plan with Allegra, upcoming workshops, and radio advertisements to Spanish speaking community members. Agnes Cho, senior consultant with bhyv, responded to questions related to bhyv's work on Rent Mail emails.

Board Member Markowitz requested information from Ms. Cho on the responses being sent out from bhyv to the community. Chair Bell noted that the PRHB may need to hire a dedicated housing counselor to ensure that emails and phone calls receive timely responses.

Michelle White, Pasadena resident, spoke on additional resources available to residents, including Pasadena Tenants Union, Job Center, Affordable Housing Services, and Housing Rights Center.

Board Member Markowitz provided an update on Policy and Program Development ad hoc committee work, including the preparation and finalization of forms being prepared and posted on the website soon, including rent withholding and three types of informational notices for tenants.

Nazanin Salehi, Goldfarb Lipman LLP, provided clarification on relocation assistance, including the notification requirements and payments.

On the order of the Vice Chair, and consensus of the Board, the information was received and filed.

**FUTURE AGENDA
ITEMS**

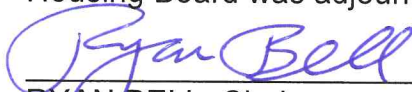
Discussion by the Board on future items included the following:

- Consideration of hiring interim housing counselors, including a job description, as well as hiring interim hearing officers, to address tenant and landlord issues and disputes
- Update on discussions with the City regarding the Board's integration as a City department
- Relocation Assistance program regulations
- Interest rates on security deposit

Following discussion, by order of the Vice Chair, and consensus of the Board, the information was received and filed.

ADJOURNMENT:

On the order of the Vice Chair, the meeting of the Pasadena Rental Housing Board was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.



RYAN BELL, Chair
Pasadena Rental Housing Board

ATTEST:



Desiree Acosta
Recording Secretary