

HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
HELD AT 1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET, BUILDING A
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817
ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 2025
IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU, STATE OF HAWAII

The Board of Directors of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority held their Regular Board Meeting at 1002 North School Street, on Thursday, August 28, 2025. The Board meeting was conducted by video conference via Zoom. Video recording of the meeting can be found on the HPHA's website: <https://hpha.hawaii.gov/about-the-hpha/meeting-packets>.

The public was able to participate in the meeting via Zoom or telephone by calling in. The meeting was also open to the public for in person participation at 1002 N. School Street, Building A, Honolulu, HI 96817. No Board members were physically present at this location. It was announced that if the HPHA lost internet or Zoom connection during the meeting, the meeting would be recessed and reconvened pursuant to instructions in the posted agenda.

Chairperson Hall stated that the Board would accept public testimony on any item relevant to the agenda during the public testimony portion of the meeting and at the time the agenda item is called for discussion.

At approximately 9:33 a.m., Chairperson Hall called the meeting to order, held a roll call, and declared a quorum present. Those present were as follows and no one else was with them at their location:

PRESENT:
(Via Zoom) Director Robert Hall, Chairperson
 Director Betty Lou Larson, Vice Chairperson
 Director Susan Kunz, Secretary
 Designee Joseph H. Campos, II
 Director Lisa Anne Darcy
 Director Christyl Nagao
 Director Todd Taniguchi

Deputy Attorney General Linda Chow
Deputy Attorney General Klemen Urbanc
Deputy Attorney General Chase Suzumoto

EXCUSED: Director Roy Katsuda
 Director Scott Glenn

STAFF PRESENT: Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director
(Via Zoom) Barbara Arashiro, Executive Assistant

Ryan Akamine, Chief Compliance Officer
Bennett Liu, Chief Financial Officer
Benjamin Park, Chief Planner
Rick Sogawa, Contracts & Procurement Officer
Becky Choi, State Housing Development Administrator
Carson Schultz, Redevelopment Officer
Dale Fujimoto, Property Mgt & Maint Services Branch Chief
Shirley Befitel, Human Resources & Safety Officer
Jennifer Weber, Section 8 Subsidy Program Chief
Nelson Lee, Systems Analyst Supervisor
Dallis Ontiveros, Housing Information Officer
Angela Nabua, Secretary
Kanoë Kepaa, Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT (via Zoom/teleconference):

Anna Matsunaga, Senator Hashimoto's Office
Casey Shoji, Senator Chang's Office
David Donald
George Stibbard
Laurie Thorson, Section 8 Participant
Lenda Tominiko, Kuhio Park Terrace Low-Rise Resident
Shontel Jones, Ho'opono Services for the Blind
Des

Approval of Minutes

Director Campos moved,

To Approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 19, 2025

Chairperson Hall stated that the Board would accept public testimony on this item.

Laurie Thorson, Section 8 Participant asked if the Board members received her written testimony and read her testimony as submitted

Chairperson Hall confirmed that the Board members received Ms. Thorson's written testimony.

Deputy Attorney General Klemen Urbanc asked Ms. Thorson to identify how her testimony was related to the approval of the minutes of the June 19, 2025, Board meeting.

Ms. Thorson stated that the minutes cannot be approved until the Board knows the status of HPHA. She informed the Board that all she was doing was providing an update.

Chairperson Hall allowed Ms. Thorson to continue.

Chairperson Hall requested an update from the Attorney General's office regarding the legal matters related to Ms. Thorson's complaint.

Attorney General Chase Suzumoto reported that in Ms. Thorson's appeal to the Ninth Circuit, all briefs have been filed. The Board was informed that the case is awaiting a decision from the Ninth Circuit. The briefs are available as part of Ms. Thorson's August 28, 2025, written testimony for reference.

Director Darcy expressed her appreciation for the quality of the minutes.

No questions or comments were made by the Board.

The minutes were approved as presented.

Discussion and Decision Making

Director Taniguchi moved,

To: (1) Reappoint Mr. Earl Mente to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority's (HPHA) Federal Eviction Board as a Board Member, for a Four-Year Term Beginning August 1, 2025, and Ending July 31, 2029; and (2) Reappoint Ms. Joyce Nakamura to the HPHA Federal Eviction Board as a Board Member, for a Four-Year Term Beginning August 1, 2025, and Ending July 31, 2029

Chairperson Hall stated that the Board would accept public testimony on this item. No public testimony was given.

Executive Director Ouansafi reported that HPHA is requesting Board approval to reappoint two (2) long-serving members of the Federal Eviction Board for four-year terms, beginning August 1, 2025 through July 31, 2029. He provided a brief background of both appointees. Executive Director Ouansafi stated that both Mr. Mente and Ms. Nakamura have been instrumental in ensuring due process for tenants during eviction hearings and bring decades of professional and board experience. Their continued service will help HPHA maintain consistency, fairness, and efficiency in the hearing process. Key details were included in the Board packet.

Chairperson Hall thanked the members for their continued volunteer service, acknowledging their time, dedication, and contributions to the Board.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Director Darcy moved,

To Appoint: (1) Mr. David Donald; Ms. Kasandra Shriver, Ms. Suzanne Burnett, Ms. Lisa Nakamura, Ms. Charmaine Doran, Ms. Ebonee Barbadillo, Ms. Sybil Stevenson, and Ms. Sandra Young to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority's (HPHA) Federal Eviction Board as new Board Members, for a Four-Year Term Beginning September 1, 2025, and Ending August 31, 2029; and (2) Mr. William Wynhoff, Mr. George Stibbard, Ms. Sylvia "Elsie" Foster, and Ms. Erin Jong to the HPHA's State Eviction Board as new Board Members, for a Four-Year Term Beginning September 1, 2025, and Ending August 31, 2029

Chairperson Hall stated that the Board would accept public testimony on this item. No public testimony was given.

Chairperson Hall and Executive Director Ouansafi acknowledged that nominees, Mr. David Donald and Mr. George Stibbard, were participating in the Zoom meeting.

Executive Director Ouansafi reported that HPHA is requesting Board approval to appoint twelve (12) new members to its Eviction Boards for four-year terms from September 1, 2025 through August 31, 2029. Executive Director Ouansafi provided a brief background on each appointee. He stated that the Eviction Boards provide fair and impartial due process hearings for tenants facing lease termination. Recruiting new members ensures HPHA maintains quorum, avoids cancelled hearings, and brings in diverse expertise from law, real estate, finance, and public administration. Key details were included in the Board packet. Executive Director Ouansafi expressed his gratitude to the new appointees for their support of HPHA and the community.

Director Darcy asked the nominees to share why they accepted the nomination.

Mr. Donnell stated that his experience mediating eviction proceedings and his background as a lawyer and law professor have highlighted the importance of fair decision-making in housing matters. He expressed that serving on the Eviction Board would be a valuable opportunity to contribute his expertise to this critical issue.

Mr. Stibbert stated that his experience as a property owner and his understanding of diverse tenant-landlord perspectives motivated him to seek a role on the Eviction Board to help ensure fair treatment in eviction cases.

Chairperson Hall thanked the new Eviction Board nominees for their time, effort, and expertise. He acknowledged the seriousness of eviction decisions and expressed reassurance that their expertise will help ensure fair and responsible outcomes aligned with the agency's mission to provide housing. He welcomed their guidance and commitment to this important and challenging role.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Executive Director's Report

Chairperson Hall stated that the Board would accept public testimony on this item.

Laurie Thorson shared her interpretation of HPHA financials and HUD data. She raised concerns about inconsistencies in reported balances.

Lenda Tominiko, Kuhio Park Terrace Low-Rise resident inquired about fumigation prior to building demolition to prevent infestation of rats and roaches in neighboring units. She also clarified that she and June Talia are not involved in a lawsuit filed by KPLR tenants against HPHA. Additionally, she inquired whether the curfew enforcement at KPT would be reinstated due to late-night loitering and disturbances.

Shontel Jones, Ho'opono Services for the Blind (Ho'opono), Blind Vendor in the KPT Resource Center raised concerns regarding the kitchen located downstairs, which she has been inquiring about for the past five years. She has received mixed responses about opening the kitchen, which has been unused for over 10 years, despite discussions with HPHA and her work with Ho'opono. She also stated that Ho'opono would provide funding for renovations to the part of the kitchen she would use. She mentioned ongoing issues with Michaels, the current property manager, not cooperating on the management of soda machines, as they claim not to be governed by the Randolph-Shepherd law.

Chairperson Hall acknowledged their comments and stated that this forum is not intended for immediate responses. He continued to state that the HPHA administration has received the concerns, and the Board will rely on them to address the specific questions related to operations.

Executive Director Ouansafi reported on the following:

- HPHA and Hawaiian Telcom launched broadband upgrades at all public housing properties under the State's Connect Kakou initiative.
- With regards to Kuhio Park Low Rises, building permits have been issued; all tenants have been relocated as of August 5, 2025. Contracts are being finalized, and financial closing is targeted for mid-September.
- The School Street Elderly Housing's vertical construction is over 37% complete and is scheduled to finish on budget and on time.
- Mayor Wright Homes Tower 1A financing application was resubmitted, and the Section 18 application is under HUD review. Phase 1A permits have been submitted to the City and Phase 1B permits are scheduled for October. With regards to Kapaa Homes, the design work is 50% complete, civil permits are expected in October with full permits by year-end.
- Kaahumanu Homes and Lanakila Homes Phase 1 financing applications have been submitted. The federal NEPA reviews are on track for Q4 2025 and Q1 2026. Additionally, master planning was launched for additional sites at Kekaha Haaheo, Hale Nana Kai Okea, Lokahi, and Hale Olaola.

- Executive Director Ouansafi reported that there are 373 units under modernization, including 226 EP units a large number of which are being retrofitted with grab bars and accessible shower to support aging in place.
- HPHA will start combining two- and three-bedroom units in some state properties to create larger units to better serve our tenants by providing housing options.
- Property Management had 17 move-ins, 31 move-outs, completed 421 annual re-examinations, and over 1,000 interim re-examinations, and 9 new admissions processed. There were 18 site visits conducted.
- Executive Director Ouansafi encouraged the public to review the HUD presentation by Mr. Jesse Wu, highlighting the distinction between voucher authority and budget authority. As explained in the presentation, not all vouchers are fully funded by HUD. Reviewing the presentation may help clarify any confusion regarding the program.
- Executive Director Ouansafi reported expenditures of approximately \$5 million in housing assistance, covering about 3,100 vouchers. He continued to state that 229 inspections were completed and HPHA has assisted 196 families through the Rent Supplement Program (RSP). Executive Director Ouansafi added that all this work continues to get accomplished even with over 90 staff vacancies.

Director Larson inquired if there were any potential federal funding impacts on programs due to activity on the federal level.

Executive Director Ouansafi expressed concern over a recent Washington Post article reporting that HUD may soon require all public housing agencies to submit information on non-citizen residents within 30 days. He stated no formal notice has been received, but the situation is being monitored closely. All tenants continue to receive assistance. There is also concern about a potential two-year limit on subsidies for public housing, but nothing official has been issued.

Director Larson asked about the high per-unit renovation cost for long-term housing projects on the neighbor islands.

Director Ouansafi emphasized HPHA's obligation is to provide safe, decent, and sanitary housing for all tenants, which requires ongoing renovation and remodeling. Renovation costs typically start around \$90,000 per unit but can be higher, especially for ADA conversions, which also require accessible routes and parking. Costs vary based on the scope of work, unit type, and whether units are being combined to create larger spaces not available in the market. He continued to explain that construction costs are generally high statewide, with slightly higher expenses on the neighbor islands. An increase in accessibility features is also being prioritized to accommodate an aging tenant population.

Chairperson Hall acknowledged and thanked staff across all programs for their continued dedication despite increasing challenges and limited resources. The Board appreciates their efforts and remains committed to supporting them.

Chairperson Hall announced that due to an easement needed for the School Street project, the next Board meeting will be moved to Thursday, September 11th, ahead of the originally scheduled date of September 18th. It was also noted that a housing conference is scheduled for September 10–11.

Director Larson moved,

To Adjourn the Meeting

The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

MINUTES CERTIFICATION FOR AUGUST 28, 2025

Minutes Prepared by:

Rochelle Kanoe Kepaa
Secretary

Date

Approved by the Hawaii Public Housing Authority Board of Directors at their Regular Meeting on November 20, 2025 [] As Presented [] As Amended

Director Susan Kunz
Board Secretary

Date