



2021-2023 Commissioners Committee Minutes

July 11, 2022

1:00 – 2:00 p.m., Eastern Time

Presiding: Lucille Boss – Chair

Chair Lucille Boss called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and roll call resulted in a quorum.

LEADERSHIP REMARKS

President Patricia Wells addressed the committee and thanked the committee for its dedication to NAHRO and to the agencies and families served. She encouraged everyone to attend the Summer Symposium and Virtual Hill Day, August 2-3. President Wells applauded Chair Boss's efforts to secure more commissioners sessions as they set the final conference schedule.

Chair Boss thanked President Wells for visiting the committee and for her remarks and segue into to the National Conference and Exhibition. The committee advocated for more commissioner sessions as they make up approximately 30% of conference attendance. The first day may focus on commissioner basics/fundamentals and the second day may focus on more in-depth issues commissioners face, i.e. financial oversight, commissioners role, communications and branding, auditing, etc.

Chair Lucille Boss asked for a motion to approve minutes from May 2, 2022.

ACTION: MOTION - APPROVAL OF MINUTES | May 2, 2022 moved by Zella Knight, seconded by Renee Smith. Motion Carried.

SURVEY FOR THE COMMISSIONERS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair Lucille Boss discussed the [draft commissioners survey](#) with the committee. As the committee solidifies objectives and tasks, there will be a focus on a draft survey, created as a needs assessment tool, in consultation with the subcommittee chairs. The goal of the survey is to establish a baseline for advocacy, communications, and diversity, equity, and inclusion subcommittees, for full committee review and comment and possible use as a handout at the National Conference. Survey demographics language was based on HUD so language and reflect what agencies are reporting. Completion date goal: September.

SURVEY COMMENTS

Q: Char Reavis applauded the survey; suggestion: use department of human services instead of welfare which significantly impacts residents. How will the data regarding an individual's educational qualifications be used for the purpose of meeting the committee's goals and objectives?

A: There is an educational component to committee goals and these questions will enable Commissioners to determine what is or could be available to individuals. If something is missing, the

committee can determine by best practices, etc. what is or may be available on a local, regional and/or national scale. The information collected will help to address disparities so higher education can be obtained for more opportunities to increase salary, benefits, etc.

Comment: Char noted gender identity can put the housing authority staff in a position where they have to determine that if it is not stated. It appears HUD documents do the same.

A: This was an issue with the Census as well. The survey questions do not require an answer. The choice of Other may be changed to Unknown.

Comment: Zella Knight echoed need for this assessment and noted, for race identity, there may be a need to include an indicator for multi-race. There is also a need to include disabilities as a survey category are to determine best practices, etc. Perhaps a general question, are you disabled, yes/no may suffice. Vice Chair Adrian Jones also asked to include questions regarding fixed income, disability, social security, veterans, etc. to indicate the type of disability issues.

A: Chair noted she will add in a placeholder for disability/disabling conditions.

Comment: Fred Banuelos suggests that either the Board chair, in consultation with agency staff and the Executive Director, or the Executive Director, in consultation with staff and the Board of Commissioners complete the survey to avoid conflicting answers from an agency.

A: Chair Boss agrees with that suggestion and will ensure that the introduction notes reflect one agency representative is being asked to complete the survey. It will be at the discretion of the Executive Director, staff and Board who will complete and submit the survey.

Suggestion: Phil Bernal noted at the beginning of the survey, it asks about certain program involvement, can we also add at the bottom of section, are you aware of agency annual, semi-annual or quarterly reports? Some commissions are not aware of programs because they do not get reports from staff on those programs.

Q. Gary Valentine: Agrees with Fred's suggestion. Regarding the disability breakdown. Should we include a mental and physical disability breakdown?

A: Chair Boss noted HUD has disabling conditions broken down by mental health, brain injury, substance abuse disorder, physical etc. HUD has seven areas. Do housing authorities collect that information?

Discussion: Char and Zella feel this is a HIPAA issue.

Gary Valentine advised [HIPAA](#) violations only take place when health care providers release your health information to someone who is not participating in the health care of that person. Regarding physical and mental disability break down, Gary noted, if were looking at providing services to our

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residents, which he thinks is the purpose of the survey, it would be beneficial to break that down for residents who have mental and physical health challenges.

Q: How do we bring mental health and/or disability services to residents? How do HAs modify, improve, or alter housing to accommodate them?

A: We can make the answer not required.

Chair Boss noted edits will be made based on committee comments, suggestions and recommendation, and will provide a link to the committee for further survey review and comment.

UPDATE | Tess Hembree, Director – Legislative Affairs

Ms. Hembree began with the August Advocacy month preview, including the kick off during the [Summer Symposium and the Virtual Hill Day August 2-3](#). This year, a few items will be different regarding August Advocacy, the largest advocacy campaign of the year. At this time, members of Congress go home to touch base with their constituents, which is the most opportune time for advocacy outreach to congressional members. During this campaign, NAHRO usually sends five to six letters, two per week, on a different topic important to NAHRO members; NAHRO sets a goal to get as many letters to Capitol Hill as possible. Last year, the goal was approximately 12,500 and members exceeded that goal with 43,000; an amazing volume of letters in six weeks. Due to the enthusiasm of everyone last year, this year's goal is 50,000!

Ms. Hembree appealed to the committee for assistance in this endeavor. She spoke to the advocacy subcommittee in June and appreciated the subcommittee's thoughts on how to incorporate commissioner language into the letters so this year's letters will reflect that language and will feel more comfortable sending them.

When members register for the Symposium they will automatically be registered for the Virtual Hill Day to meet with members of Congress via Zoom. Please register as soon as possible to ensure constituents are scheduled for meetings with representatives of Congress. This allows members to continue to grow the relationship with congressional representatives and staff. NAHRO intends to resume in-person meetings next year, during the Washington Conference in Washington, DC, where you can actually go up to Capitol Hill and make your physical presence known, and continue the Virtual Hill day in the summer. In addition, a packet is being prepared to include graphics on the topics covered in August Advocacy. The letters will be in the [Advocacy Center](#) each week.

If members have been designated as a Congressional Contact and are still receiving invitations to re-apply, please contact [Jenna Hampton](#).

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS | [Subcommittee Objectives](#)

Advocacy – Renee Smith

Ms. Smith noted their goals are set with the exception of working with Legislative Network Advisory Committee (LNAC) to develop to train and educate NAHRO members. Ms. Smith has been in contact with Jim Dewey, LNAC member, and commissioners committee member Karina Mason Rorris has a

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meeting on July 21 so she can assist in goal development. Outstanding is how to track commissioners' participation without a way of identifying them. Ms. Smith worked on the advocacy training and it should be complete now, and available soon. Karina Mason Rorris noted there is not currently a tracking method; Ms. Hembree recommended add a dropdown box to identify if a writer is a commissioner, executive director, employee, community member; she will mention this at an upcoming meeting and report back to Chair Boss and Staff Liaison, La Tonya Rajah.

Communications – Chair Lucille Boss/Char Reavis

Commissioners Resources page and the Commissioners At Work Video have been updated. Please see Housekeeping Reminder/Updates below to view video and send your photos of the work you are doing to La Tonya. We want to showcase the video at the National Conference and post on the Commissioners Resource page. In addition, the Commissioners of the Year award submission deadline is August 5. Commissioner of the Working Group chair Johnny Johnson sent a reminder to all of the Regional VPs for Commissioners and a reminder went to the Regional Service Officers to send in their nomination applications. NAHRO wishes to receive as many submissions as possible for consideration. The submission can be done by someone else or you can self-nominate. To date, still holding at 2 entries with 7 remaining from 2021 pool.

Diversity and Equity – Zella Knight

Robust meeting in June. Focus to collaboration and professional development. One area of concern is that only two of eight NAHRO regions have a DEI committee. Greater efforts will be exerted regarding advocacy among the regions to align with us.

REGIONAL REPORTS | Regional Vice Presidents (RVP) or *regional member

*Any SERC member may provide update.

Reports may be submitted to Chair Lucille Boss or Staff Liaison, La Tonya Rajah.

Regional President, Regional Service Officer and Regional Vice Presidents for Commissioners can be found along with chapter information and regional rosters on the NAHRO website under [NAHRO Regions and Chapters](#).

HOUSEKEEPING REMINDERS/UPDATES

- [Direct News](#) – Reminder: Become A Congressional Contact

Contact [La Tonya](#) regarding the following items:

- **Login Information/Access to Committee and Subcommittee Zoom Meetings.**
Once you login to the NAHRO website with your user id/password, the Committee roster, subcommittee description and meeting schedules can be found on the [committee working materials page](#).

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- **Quickest way to view the committee directory:**
Login, click on MY ACCOUNT, MY COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONERS COMMITTEE or on any other advisory committee on which you serve.
- Please advise if you wish to be a Commissioners Mentor and assist in greeting first-time attendees at the National Conference.

Attachments

[Journal of Housing and Community Development Magazine print schedule](#)

[Subcommittee Objectives](#)

[Commissioners Mentors List](#)

[Commissioners At Work- updated video](#)

ATTENDANCE		ABSENT
Lucille Boss, Chair	AJ Jones, Vice Chair	John Benton
Gary Allsup	Zella Knight	Sam Bergami
Fred Bañuelos	Richard Laferte	Barb Cleland
Phil Bernal	Karina Mason Rorris	Richard Conforti
Alanna Conard	Char Reavis	Dorothy Carty Daniel
Carleen Cumberbatch	Angela Reed	Neil Flynn
Willie Haynes	Renee Smith	Homer Hall
Dirk Hoek	Joycelynn Straight	Gregory Hartwig
Thomas Jefferson	Cody Schuler	Brenda Honeycutt
Johnny Johnson	Gary Valentine	Delores McKinley-Eldridge
Carleen Cumberbatch	Nikki Vazquez	George Perez
Willie Haynes		Susan Ulrich
GUESTS		Bobby Wilson
Tess Hembree	President Patricia Wells	

**Next Commissioners Committee meeting in person:
National Conference and Exhibition – San Diego, CA September 21, 2022**