

MESA HOUSING SERVICES GOVERNING BOARD

April 1, 2021

The Mesa Housing Services Governing Board of the City of Mesa met via a virtual format streamed into the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on April 1, 2021 at 7:30 a.m.

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT

John Giles, Chairperson
Jennifer Duff, Vice Chairperson
Mark Freeman
David Luna
Julie Spilsbury
Kevin Thompson*

BOARDMEMBERS ABSENT

Francisco Heredia
Gary Nelson

STAFF PRESENT

Christopher Brady
Dee Ann Mickelsen
Jim Smith

(* Boardmember participated in the meeting through the use of video conference equipment.)

Chairperson Giles excused Boardmembers Nelson and Heredia from the entire meeting.

1. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

2. Approval of minutes from the November 19, 2020 meeting.

It was moved by Boardmember Luna, seconded by Boardmember Freeman, that the minutes from the November 19, 2020 Mesa Housing Services Governing Board meeting be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Giles-Duff-Freeman-Luna-Spilsbury-Thompson

NAYS – None

ABSENT – Heredia-Nelson

Chairperson Giles declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

3-a. Hear a presentation and discuss updates on the City's Housing Choice Voucher Programs including utilization, funding, and expenditures.

Community Services Deputy Director Mary Brandon introduced Housing Supervisor Rosario Beltran-Joshi and displayed a PowerPoint presentation. **(See Attachment 1)**

Ms. Brandon explained Boardmember Nelson is no longer on the program and staff will be sending a new recommendation for a new resident boardmember.

Ms. Brandon advised the Mesa Housing Authority is required to do a five-year plan every five years. She presented the 2021 progress on the goals and objectives. She highlighted payment standards align with fair market rents and this year's payment standards are set at 105% for one- and two-bedroom units. She mentioned landlord outreach continues to be a struggle and staff is looking at opportunities in using stimulus funding to enhance the landlord outreach program by offering higher incentives to participants in the program. She pointed out 2020 ended with 97% voucher utilization. She outlined the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program is an optional HUD program that helps identify roadblocks, sets goals, and provides resources to assist in becoming self-sufficient. She explained the escrow system and shared success stories of individuals who have graduated from the program. (See Page 2 of Attachment 1)

In response to questions posed by Boardmember Luna, Ms. Brandon stated Donna Hunter is the FSS specialist and has a caseload of approximately 50 individuals and handles the casework all the way through the program.

Ms. Beltran-Joshi added Ms. Hunter works with Mesa Community College and A New Leaf, as well as other non-profits to provide wraparound services.

In response to a question from Boardmember Luna asking whether the FSS Program could be obligatory, Ms. Brandon said the program is offered through HUD and is optional. She noted that staff reaches out to participants who might be a good fit for the program to encourage participation.

Ms. Brandon reported last year three individuals graduated and this year there have already been five graduates from the Family Self-Sufficiency Program. She commented in 25 years the program has given out over a million dollars in escrow funds.

Ms. Brandon stated the administrative plan is updated yearly and is used to follow policies, processes, and regulations that are given by HUD. She explained the updates include clarifications such as arrest records or criminal records cannot be the sole basis for ineligibility and more information must be requested, the waiting list should be updated on an as-needed basis, determination of income from assets is 10% of the market value for real property, and a housing assistance payment (HAP) contract cannot be entered into if a family is paying full rent. (See Page 3 of Attachment 1)

She mentioned utilization in 2019 was 95.6% and this year ended at 99.7%. She compared the administrative fees and expenditures for years 2019 and 2020. She explained in 2020 staff was able to charge a portion of their time to the CARES funding which increased the reserves. She shared the American Rescue Plan of 2021 states housing authorities who have high utilization may be awarded additional vouchers and the City will know by May 10 the number of vouchers and the guidance on use. (See Page 4 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Vice Chairperson Duff regarding whether there are enough landlords participating to use the additional vouchers, Ms. Brandon agreed enhancement of landlord outreach will need to occur. She added most participants can find units to rent; however, the hard-to-house individuals are the challenge.

Ms. Beltran-Joshi presented the 2020 HAP that were reimbursed to landlords. She remarked the increase in March through May was due to individuals losing their jobs at the beginning of the pandemic. (See Page 5 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Beltran-Joshi stated the City has 191 Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers for homeless veterans. She reported over the past two years utilization has continued to increase and currently 158 veterans are being housed. She indicated vaccinating veterans is a priority at this time. (See Page 6 of Attachment 1)

Ms. Beltran-Joshi informed Council that challenges for the Mesa Housing Authority include landlord participation, the high market rents, and delayed inspections due to COVID. (See Page 7 of Attachment 1)

In response to a question from Vice Chairperson Duff inquiring about the incentives offered to landlords to enroll in the program, Ms. Beltran-Joshi outlined landlords are offered up to seven days vacancy payments and up to \$2000 if a unit is damaged.

Ms. Brandon announced the eviction moratorium has been extended to June 30.

In response to a question posed by Vice Chairperson Duff regarding whether the program helps with rental deposits, Ms. Brandon advised the City receives funding from the HOME dollars to assist with security and utility deposits. She added the Landlord Incentive Program helps with administrative and application fees.

In response to a question from Boardmember Spilsbury in reference to whether CARES dollars could be used to increase the number of Family Unification Program vouchers for kids aging out of the foster system, Ms. Brandon remarked once the guidance is received staff will be able to determine which populations to target. She commented staff continues to look for additional voucher opportunities.

Boardmember Freeman expressed his appreciation to the Mesa Housing Authority team for meeting the needs of the community. He agreed more outreach needs to occur to attract more landlords.

In response to a question from Boardmember Luna with regard to whether the housing units are concentrated in a particular area or spread throughout the community, Ms. Brandon indicated each participant is advised as to the amount of rent they can afford based on their income and are allowed to seek housing anywhere within the city limits.

Chairperson Giles echoed the comments shared by the boardmembers. He mentioned the high utilization in the program is a sign of a healthy program.

Chairperson Giles thanked staff for the presentation.

4. Take action on the following resolution:

- 4-a. Approving the City of Mesa Public Housing Annual Plan for Fiscal Year 2021/2022 and authorizing the Chairman of the Board to submit the Annual Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. – HGB Resolution No. 21-1

It was moved by Boardmember Luna, seconded by Boardmember Spilsbury, to adopt HGB Resolution No. 21-1 approving the City of Mesa Public Housing Annual Plan for Fiscal Year 2021/2022 and authorizing the Chairperson of the Board to submit the Annual Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Giles-Duff-Freeman-Luna-Spilsbury-Thompson

NAYS – None

ABSENT – Heredia-Nelson

Chairperson Giles declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

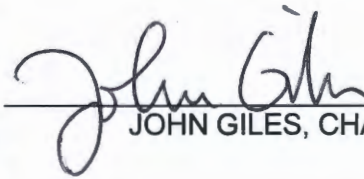
5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Mesa Housing Services Governing Board meeting adjourned at 7:58 a.m.

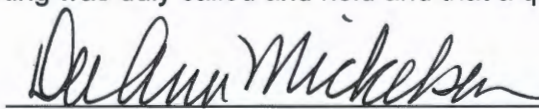
ATTEST:


DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK




JOHN GILES, CHAIRMAN

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Mesa Housing Services Governing Board meeting of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 1st day of April 2021. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.


DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK



Housing Services Governing Board

MARY BRANDON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

ROSARIO BELTRAN-JOSHI, HOUSING SUPERVISOR

APRIL 1, 2021

Housing Services Annual Plan:

2021 Annual progress on goals and objectives

Payment
Standards to align
with Fair Market
Rents

Virtual Briefings
and Hearings

FY19/20 Audit
No findings or
concerns

Enhanced Landlord
Outreach Program

Maintain Voucher
Utilization

Promote Family
Self-Sufficiency
Program

Housing Services Governing Board



Administrative Plan Updates:

Annual updates to policies and processes

Background checks for eligibility

Waiting List

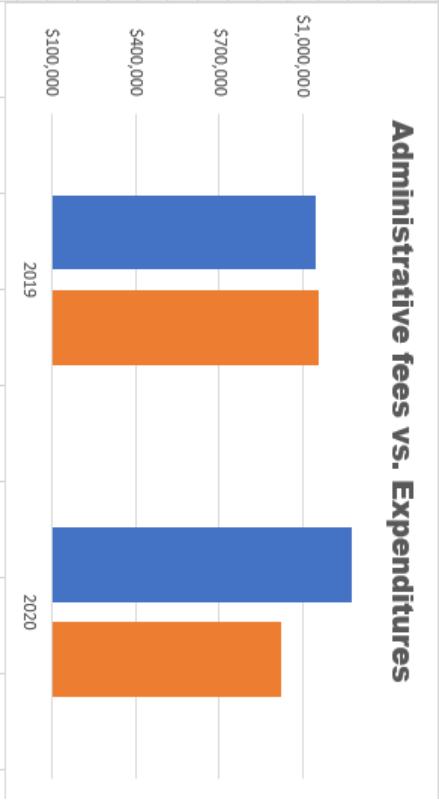
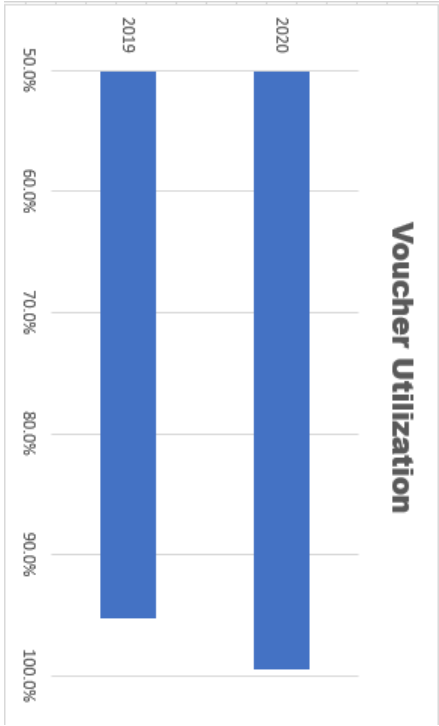
Income from assets

Moving with continued assistance

Housing Services Governing Board

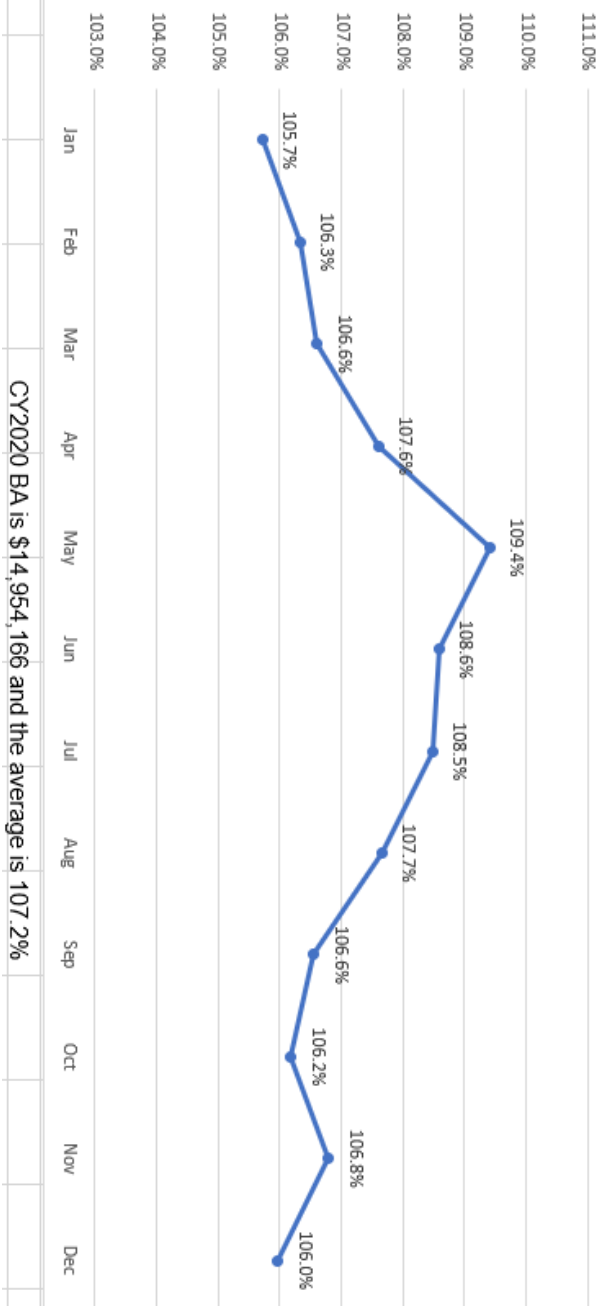


Voucher Utilization & Administrative Fees



2020 Housing Assistance Payments (HAP)

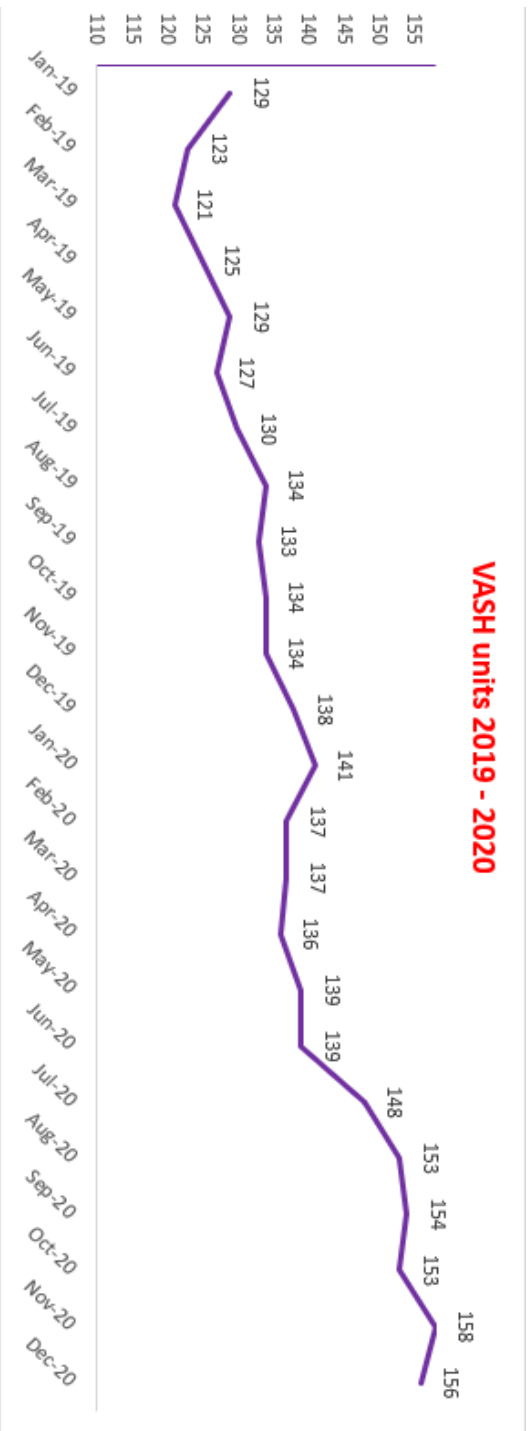
SECTION 8 RENT CY 2020



Housing Services Governing Board



Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing



Housing Services Governing Board

Housing Services Challenges

Landlord Participation

- Landlord Outreach Program
- Incentives

High Market Rent

- Rent Reasonableness Check
- Per Unit Cost Report

Housing Quality Standards Inspections

- COVID Impact
- HUD Waiver



Housing Services Governing Board

QUESTIONS

Housing Services Governing Board



Action Items:

Conduct a public hearing to allow for public comments regarding Mesa Housing Services' 2021/2022 Public Housing Agency Annual Plan.



Housing Services Governing Board

Action Items:

Adopt a resolution approving Mesa Housing Services' FY2021/2022 Public Housing Agency Annual Plan and authorizing the Chairman of the Board or his designated representative to sign and submit to Housing and Urban Development (HUD).



Housing Services Governing Board

Action Items:

Approve revisions and updates to Mesa Housing Services Administrative Plan, which outlines the Mesa Housing Services policies.



Housing Services Governing Board

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