

GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, November 29, 2023 – 1:00 p.m.
Academy Conference Center – Brigham Room
58 North Main in Brigham City

MINUTES

PRESENT or on ZOOM

Commissioner William Cox	Commissioner Lee Perry
Commissioner Stan Summers	Mayor DJ Bott
Mayor Lyle Holmgren	Commissioner Sim Weston
Council Member Sandi Goodlander	Council Member Karl Ward
County Executive David Zook	

EXCUSED

Mayor Scott Sabey	Commissioner Boyd Bingham
Mayor Mike Leonhardt	Mayor Larry Jacobson
Commissioner Jon Lee	Mayor Holly Daines

BRAG STAFF PRESENT

Roger Jones	Tricia Fuller
Brian Carver	Karen Merkle
Shawn Milne	Lucas Martin
Brittany Alfau (Zoom)	

OTHERS PRESENT

Chandler Beutler – Senator Mitt Romney’s Office
Nathan Jackson – Senator Mike Lee’s Office
Lisa Roskelley - Congressman Moore’s Office
Sherry Stevens – Utah Rural Outreach Manager, Governor’s Office of Economic Development
Troy Lamb– DWS
Sean Hales– Box Elder News and Journal

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND MINUTES

Commissioner William Cox, Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.
Cox asked to entertain a MOTION to APPROVE the minutes from the September 27, 2023 Governing Board meeting. Mayor DJ Bott made a MOTION to approve both sets of minutes. Commissioner Lee Perry SECONDED the MOTION and it PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

BRAG SERVICES FOR HOUSING AND THE HOMELESS

Due to the housing shortages and concerns in our area, County Executive David Zook requested Tricia Fuller, Housing Authority Director and Lucas Martin, Human Services Director report on the programs they head at BRAG.

Tricia summarized the Housing Choice Voucher Program, formerly known as Section 8. BRAG does not provide the actual rental properties, but works with landlords. Since 2020, BRAG has received 46 new housing vouchers and they will continue to apply for more vouchers when available. Tricia provided the following:

HOUSING AUTHORITY FACT SHEET
Housing Choice Voucher Program - Services for CY '2023

Total Number of Vouchers

Logan City Housing Authority	451 allocated HUD vouchers
Bear River Regional Housing Authority	161 allocated HUD vouchers

TOTAL 612 allocated vouchers to serve Bear River Area

Waiting List

547 applicants are currently on the waiting list
 Box Elder County -156 applicants
 Cache County - 390 applicants
 Rich County - 1 applicant

HUD Program Income Guidelines

	<u>Box Elder County</u>	<u>Cache County</u>	<u>Rich County</u>
Extremely-low income	\$18,450	\$18,350	\$18,350
Very-low income	\$30,750	\$30,600	\$30,600

The program income limit is the very-low income amount. HUD requires that 75% of the newly admitted program participants be extremely-low income.

Total Number of Assisted Families for CY '2023

A total of 716 households received benefits from the Housing Choice Voucher Program for CY 2023. The annual turnover rate of program participants is approximately 20%.

Voucher Utilization Rate for CY '2023

Logan City Housing Authority Utilization = 99%
 Bear River Regional Housing Authority Utilization = 99%

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Expenditures

2022 HAP Logan City Housing Authority = \$2,066,902
 Bear River Regional Housing Authority = \$732,589

2023 HAP Logan City Housing Authority = \$2,324,400
 Bear River Regional Housing Authority = \$862,034

The lowest amount a program participant is receiving in housing assistance is \$4.00 per month. The highest amount a program participant is receiving in housing assistance is \$1,817.00 per month.

The average housing assistance payment for all program participants is \$450.00.

Family Activity

14% of all housing participants are single parent households
 28% of all housing participant households are employed.
 76% of all housing participant households are receiving Social Security benefits.

64% of those that receive Social Security benefits are disabled.
 45% of those that receive Social Security benefits are over the age of 62 years.
 Tricia then explained the formula that determines the amount of rent assistance money received. It depends on number of bedrooms needed, payment standards minus 30% of client's monthly income. The proposed payment standards come from HUD Fair Market Rents.

Tricia presented the following Proposed Payment Standards to be effective January 1, 2024 and asked the members of the **Bear River Regional Housing Authority Board** who were present to approve.

Box Elder County

Current	<u>0 BR</u> \$798	<u>1 BR</u> \$896	<u>2 BR</u> \$1,156	<u>3 BR</u> \$1,564	<u>4 BR</u> \$1,878	<u>5 BR</u> \$2,160	<u>6 BR</u> \$2,442
Proposed	<u>0 BR</u> \$725	<u>1 BR</u> \$890	<u>2 BR</u> \$1,069	<u>3 BR</u> \$1,471	<u>4 BR</u> \$1,750	<u>5 BR</u> \$2,013	<u>6 BR</u> \$2,275

Cache County

Current	<u>0 BR</u> \$755	<u>1 BR</u> \$898	<u>2 BR</u> \$1,118	<u>3 BR</u> \$1,590	<u>4 BR</u> \$1,906	<u>5 BR</u> \$2,191	<u>6 BR</u> \$2,477
Proposed	<u>0 BR</u> \$869	<u>1 BR</u> \$920	<u>2 BR</u> \$1,152	<u>3 BR</u> \$1,623	<u>4 BR</u> \$1,955	<u>5 BR</u> \$2,248	<u>6 BR</u> \$2,541

Rich County

Current	<u>0 BR</u> \$662	<u>1 BR</u> \$804	<u>2 BR</u> \$991	<u>3 BR</u> \$1,314	<u>4 BR</u> \$1,688	<u>5 BR</u> \$1,942	<u>6 BR</u> \$2,195
Proposed	<u>0 BR</u> \$678	<u>1 BR</u> \$827	<u>2 BR</u> \$996	<u>3 BR</u> \$1,403	<u>4 BR</u> \$1,690	<u>5 BR</u> \$1,943	<u>6 BR</u> \$2,197

Mayor DJ Bott made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the proposed standards as they are now at 110% of Poverty Level as well as the impending change based on approval of the requested 120% of Poverty Level. Mayor Lyle Holmgren **SECONDED** the **MOTION** and it **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Lucas Martin shared data on the Homeless Programs and Services the Human Services Department at BRAG facilitates. He included data from multiple years to offer points of reference for comparison.

Homeless Individuals Applying By Year

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
All Homeless Programs	314	451	818	737

It was noted that 19 out of 20 applications are denied due to not enough funding. Also that it is the same BRAG staff size as in 2020 that processed 314 applications as the 737 applications so far in 2023. Human Services staff are very busy.

Annual Homeless Point in Time Count January 26th-28th

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Unsheltered	56	31	15	26 surveys
Sheltered	63	94	165	132
Total	119	126	180	158

26 Observations not included in the 2023 numbers (refused survey, couldn't wake).

2023 numbers still pending final counts from the state.

Over 130 volunteers, nearly half from the community.

Homeless Specific Funding

	2020	2021	2022	2023
State Funds* ¹	\$124,783	\$140,438	\$211,438	\$340,438
COC* ²	\$123,000	\$123,000	\$123,000	\$123,000
Homeless Mitigation* ³	NA	NA	\$32,000	\$37,565

*1- State Homeless Funds, including street outreach, Emergency Solutions Grant (Rapid Rehousing for households without children), and hotel vouchers. 8 households helped with rent, 2084 nights of emergency shelter in FY 2023.

*2-Continuum of Care funding, federal funding targeted to households with children. 28 households assisted.

*3-Homeless Mitigation funds are for case management and street outreach.

Other funds may be used to help homeless families that are not specifically earmarked for homeless including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (around 25 households with children annually assisted with up to 4 months), Community Services Block Grant (around 20 households assisted with deposit or past due rent for one month) and Social Services Block Grant (5 households assisted with rent or deposit for one month, 10 plus households assisted with bus vouchers).

Community partners who assist homeless clients at BRAG:

Cache Food Pantry provided 3,246 pounds of ready to eat low preparation food to BRAG.

Cache Humanitarian Center provided sleeping mats and hygiene kits.

Hyrum Humanitarian Center provided quilts, blankets, hats, gloves, socks and hygiene kits.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints provided \$15,000 in DI vouchers

Lucas mentioned the Street Outreach Program refers the homeless they find to the WAB Warming Center that night and then to BRAG services the soonest work day.

BRAG received \$200,000 in winter overflow funds this year. Primarily it is used for the Hotel Voucher Program.

Last winter BRAG provided 2084 nights of shelter in hotels.

During the first open month of November 2023 BRAG already provided 765 nights in hotels.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)
FIRST PUBLIC HEARING TO GATHER INPUT ON PROPOSED PROJECTS

Commissioner Bill Cox moved to **DECLARE** that Bear River Association of Governments (BRAG) **OPEN** its Public Hearing to Gather Input on Proposed Projects. Mayor DJ Bott **SECONDED** the MOTION and the Hearing **OPENED**.

Commissioner Cox read the script, declaring the purpose of this hearing is to provide citizens with pertinent information about the Community Development Block Grant program and to allow for discussion of possible applications for the 2024 funding cycle. The grant money must be spent on projects benefiting primarily low and moderate-income persons. Bear River Association of Governments is expecting to receive approximately \$900,000 in this new program year. All eligible activities that can be accomplished under this program are identified in the CDBG Application Policies and Procedures Manual. Any interested persons can review it at any time. Examples of eligible activities include construction of public works and facilities such as water and sewer lines and fire stations. Other examples of eligible activities also include acquisition of real property and provision of public services such as food banks or homeless shelters. In the past BRAG has received funding for Single Family Home Emergency Repairs, First-time Home Buyer assistance, and planning and administrative funds to provide regional rating and ranking of projects for the State of Utah CDBG Program. These activities are listed in the Regional "Consolidated Plan". This list shows which projects BRAG has identified as being needed in the community.

Time was then given if there was anyone with questions, comments or suggestions.

There was no **public comment**.

There was however, a good discussion among board members about how best to use these funds. Considering big ideas like land acquisitions or helping with water and sewer in subdivisions that would provide lower income permanent housing options. Carver noted that funds could not be used for new construction of buildings but could be used to make additions and improvements on existing facilities. It was suggested focusing all the funds on one priority instead of several projects. The goal of having a plan in place to use funding when it becomes available to complete the chosen bigger project over the course of a few years.

Mayor Bott moved to **CLOSE** the public hearing and Commissioner Summers **SECONDED** the motion followed by **UNANIMOUS APPROVAL**.

ADOPTING THE REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs)

Brian Carver referred board members to the packet detailing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Bear River Association of Governments 2024-2028. CEDs is designed to provide leadership among the private and public sector with the direction of how to use resources to strengthen the region's economic growth and stability. Carver asked board members to look over this extensive five year strategy draft copy, give suggestions, changes, updates, and then approve it. (Copy of CEDs in Governing Board Binder) Commissioner Summers made a **MOTION** to **APPROVE** the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Bear River Association of Governments 2024-2028 with a few changes in committee members and adding a National Historic Park to Box Elder County.

Council Member Karl Ward **SECONDED** the MOTION and all agreed to **ADOPT** and **APPROVE** the CEDS draft.

LOOKING BACK OVER PAST FIFTY YEARS

Roger Jones, BRAG Executive Director, created a handout with happenings that took place in the Bear River Region from 2011- present for board members to review.

THE NEW UTAH KEEPERS OF THE FLAME PUBLICATION

Jones shared highlights from The New Utah, Keepers of the Flame Report by Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute. He provided copies of the 50 page report to each board member as it is critical for them to understand the significant transitions Utah is facing associated with growth and change. (Report included in minutes)

Some Transitions between Old Utah and New Utah highlighted:

- Population Rank moved from 34th to 30th.
- Growth used to be more internal with 34% from migration, now it is 61% from migration.
- The Older Population (age 65+) is moving from 9.1% in 2010 to 20% of Utah's population in 2050.
- Utah has become more multicultural, increasing from 9.5% racial/ethnic minority to 23.3%.
- Utah went from a strong economy to an elite economy, meaning one of the best in the nation.
- Utah used to have affordable housing costs to wages, now a major concern is Utah's supply of housing that has failed to keep pace with demand resulting in unaffordable housing costs.

GROWTH ISSUES IN BOX ELDER COUNTY

Brigham City Mayor DJ Bott highlighted the new Golden Spike State Monument that is placed near Interstate 15 to guide visitors to the Golden Spike National Historic Park. The enlarged replica of the original golden spike represents the groups of laborers who built the railroad. The Forest Street overpass to build an auto bridge over the railroad was approved. He ended with a hope for more snow to fill the reservoirs.

Tremonton City Mayor Lyle Holmgren shared specific data about the affordable housing issue in Tremonton. The unemployment rate is extremely low, but the cost of renting or purchasing a home is high compared to the median income of \$50,000. He said the median rent is \$970. Of the 52 homes currently on the market in Tremonton only 10 of them are under \$300,000. He also noted most retail shopping is done in areas like Logan instead of Tremonton and they hope to add more in Tremonton.

Commissioner Stan Summers agreed with the critical needs of affordable housing, specifically for public servants with lower pay such as teachers and police officers. He mentioned the good economic growth as many companies want to build in Box Elder County as it is the crossroads of Utah with the interstates in the area, but with that comes lots of truck traffic.

APPROVE INDIRECT COST PLAN

Roger Jones asked for approval of the *Indirect Cost/Cost Allocation Plan for Fiscal Year 2024* for Bear River Association of Governments (included in the meeting packet). There are no changes from prior years. Mayor Holmgren made the **MOTION** to **APPROVE**; Commissioner Lee Perry **SECONDED** and the motion **PASSED** unanimously.

DELEGATION OF SIGNATORY AUTHORITY

Deborah Crowther, one of BRAG's check signers retired in July, hence, the need to propose the board approve two additional check signers:

Tricia Fuller – BRAG's Housing Authority Director

Brian Carver, BRAG's Community and Economic Development Director

Additional check signers already in place:

Roger Jones, Executive Director

Karen Merkley, Assistant Director

Lucas Martin, Human Services Director

Jeff Kearl, Housing Rehabilitation and Development Director

These persons are authorized to sign checks for the Bear River Association of Governments, Bear River Community Services Foundation, Bear River CROWN, CROWN at Tremonton Village, and Tremont Village Apartments. Two signatures are required on each check.

Council Member Ward **MOVED** to approve the proposed check signers; Mayor Bott **SECONDED** and **APPROVAL** was unanimous.

OTHER BUSINESS

From our legislative guests:

Lisa Roskelley reported that Congressman Blake Moore was elected as Vice Chair of the House Republican Conference which will be a great opportunity.

Nathan Jackson reported on some new staff for Senator Lee. Mark Wait will be his new chief of staff as his longtime chief of staff Allyson Bell will take on the role of senior adviser to Lee for the next few years. Also updates on military and wildfire issues.

Chandler Buetler shared about Senator Mitt Romney and Senator Joe Manchin's Fiscal Stability Act. The task is to find legislative solutions to stabilize and decrease our national debt, which exceeds \$33.6 trillion. He also asked if anyone had any "hail mary" ideas that they wanted Senator Romney to try to push across the finish line during his last year in office to reach out to him.

ADJOURN

The Governing Board meeting **ADJOURNED** at 2:30 p.m.