

Organizational Plan for the Use and Management of HB22-1117 Funds

By: Eric W. Blackhurst

After attending the June 15, 2022 of the VEP Task Force and listening to the discussion about the need for specific and detailed plan for the use of funds for both childcare and housing, I am providing my personal perspective on the housing initiative and what I think would interest voters as suggested by Mr. Batey.

Specific details related to the plan need to be developed by the entities cooperating in use of the funds generated by a 3.5 percent sales tax on short-term rentals and lodging properties within the boundaries already established for the local marketing district known as Visit Estes Park.

In all likelihood the Town's Housing Needs Assessment currently being conducted will not be completed until after the election. Consequently, providing specific numbers and recommendation from that source will not be available to the voters heading into the election.

Forecasting a specific percentage of dollars for childcare will be dependent upon a detailed study of needs for that service that may include projections of the number of children served, the number of licensed early childhood educators needed and the type and location of facilities.

The Executive Summary provided in the Draft Model of Plans makes the assumption that the Estes Park Housing Authority (EPHA) will be responsible for developing 1700 plus housing units. This assumption is just that – an assumption. While the 1999 Housing Needs Assessment stated a housing need between 809 and 1,032 units of all types of housing, from 2000 through 2008 the private sector created approximately 1,100 housing units, on average 1.15 percent growth per year. EPHA acquired and managed about 67 units during that same period, and it is fully prepared to address the issues identified in the needs assessment to come.

In this document you will find the following:

1. This section addresses the Overall Organizational Plan in the Estes Valley for Housing. Section 2 will address the plan to begin implementation to meet identified needs.
 - A. The Town of Estes Park (Town) has the resources and fiduciary experience to manage the revenue generated through the collection and disbursement of the lodging tax increase generated by VEP. The Town will receive, manage, disburse, and account for the funds specifically set aside for housing and childcare. Intergovernmental agreements will be developed as needed.
 - B. The organizational structure is that of governmental and quasi-governmental entities, i.e. the Town, EPHA and VEP. Larimer County involvement would be based upon particular needs and circumstances as they arise. These entities are already in place

and functioning under State statutes and requirements and oversight. Modification in staffing and resources will be addressed as circumstances dictate.

- C. Accountability: State law requires the Town, EPHA and VEP to conduct annual governmental audits by independent auditing firms which are open public records. Monthly/quarterly financial records for each entity also are public documents.
- D. Transparency: Organizational and project budgets are developed in public for VEP, EPHA and the Town. These are available for review and public input prior to adoption.

2. Business Plan to address the Estes Valley Workforce Housing Needs

- A. The Mission Statement for EPHA: **In order to ensure a balanced and sustainable community the Estes Park Housing Authority creates and facilitates housing opportunities and services for persons of low and moderate income.** EPHA will continue that mission using a variety of historic tools and techniques in addition to new opportunities provided by additional resources provided by HB22-1117.
- B. Over the past 22 years EPHA, a quasi-governmental entity, has used a variety of initiatives to evaluate the needs of the community; acquired, built, renovated, developed, managed, rented and sold housing in both the public and private sectors; and coordinated efforts with the Town and Larimer County concerning housing issues and opportunities.
- C. EPHA is governed by a Town Appointed Board of Commissioners who serve for 5-year terms with no term limits. The organization has an Executive Director, Housing Supervisor, Administrative Assistant, 2 full-time property managers and 2 fulltime maintenance personnel.
- D. Due to reporting to Federal and State housing entities, specialized accounting and fiscal management is through the Loveland Housing Authority. Insurance is provided by both commercial and governmental entities.
- E. Housing needs assessments are conducted in conjunction with the Town and other local entities such as the medical center, school district and local employers about every 8 to 10 years. These assessments have proved to be accurate and timely to generate data about current and future employment needs and housing. These reports also generate information about desired types of housing and what inventory currently exists.
- F. Using the annually produced Federal and State Area Median Income figures and local resources such as wage scales for selected employers, EPHA has identified workers in a variety of income brackets in need of housing. That is also evidenced by waiting lists for both low-income housing and the more recent addition of units with no income restrictions.

G. EPHA is a not-for-profit entity and as such can invest revenues above operating costs in other projects or into reserves for future use for development, acquisition or maintenance. Budgets and balance sheets are available for review.

I could continue with additional examples of what EPHA has accomplished in conjunction with the Town and other entities to contribute to the existing housing discussion, but I believe many of the issues raised in the "...Draft Model of Plans for Discussion" have been addressed in the preceding comments. In addition, the 2016 Housing Needs Assessment addresses many of the items contained in the Draft.

For example, demographics of the community can be found on page 7 and 8; population and household characteristics on page 23; number of jobs and employer projections on page 36; types of housing on pages 45-53; and, most significantly, implementation strategies on pages 16-22. If you have not read 2016 study or the executive summary, I strongly urge you to do so as there is much more relevant information in the 109-page report.

The plans for housing are detailed. Please be assured this is my approach and not approach of the EPHA Board of Commissioners. Are there items missing? Probably, but it is ready to flesh out and take to the voters. I cannot speak to the plan for childcare, but there are others in the community who can, and it should not take them long to formulate a plan to tackle the issues which can be addressed with additional fiscal resources.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eric W. Blackhurst". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

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