



Tenant Advisory Council (TAC)

Meeting Minutes Report

Date: July 28, 2026

Location: In-person at Eastwood Court Apartments

Facilitator: Meg Kausch, Community Engagement Policy Coordinator

Staff Attendees:

- Michael Buonocore – Interim Executive Director, Home Forward
- Kellie Shaw – Director of Equity, Home Forward

Meeting Duration: 2 Hours

Recorder: Meg Kausch

TAC Members Present: Frank Culbertson, Traci Van Zandt, Raven Smith, Tammi Bell, Sarah Lawrence, Margaret Rogers, Seclenda Hadley, Melissa McClellan, Debbie Blackmon, Ruthie Rhone, Megan Sahim, Shawntae Barber, Corpus Pacem, Carla Williams Frison, Aimee Bagdesarian

1. Welcome, Announcements, and Opening Business

Meg Kausch opened the meeting and invited Michael Buonocore to share about budget updates and plans to engage with tenants.

Home Forward Budget Conversation:

- Michael Buonocore provided context on the budget timeline and approval process and opened the discussion on how to best engage with tenants around the budget outlook and budget cut options.
- Tenants noted current budget issues at their properties, with Traci sharing about spending related to property management decisions where tenants were not consulted on spending.
- Meg Kausch clarified that part of the discussion is centering on Home Forward improving tenant communications and outreach during a consultation period.
- Carla shared the importance of previously having newsletters that were on physical printed paper so that residents receive information.
- Debbie stated the importance of clearly outlining the engagement purposes from the Home Forward side, so that tenants have clear understanding of their expectations and role in the space. Raven agreed that providing a space that clearly outlines what the meeting time will be used for and providing food for a supportive space for tenants is important.
- Kellie Shaw prompted tenants to support brainstorming on what tangible aspects of engagement Home Forward can do better to make sure that we are providing information in a helpful, productive format. Debbie followed up with noting that

tenants need clearer direction on what they can and cannot impact and wondering if these decisions have already been made by Home Forward leadership. Michael responded that the decisions have not been made yet and that this tenant engagement is meant to capture tenant feedback.

- Debbie and Michael continued the discussion on what Home Forward's current non-profit partnerships look like. Debbie also asked if the budget cuts will greatly impact the tenants more than other parts of the organization. Michael responded that the impact may not be disproportionate, but that tenants will be able to provide feedback on what they want the cuts to look like. Debbie noted that staff cuts should be evaluated on how well staff are doing their job. Frank stated that staff cuts may impact the TAC effectiveness as well. Michael stated that the TAC is just coming into what they are capable of and that continuing their work is important.
- Meg closed out the discussion by thanking Michael and all TAC members for engaging in this conversation that will help Home Forward in supporting stronger tenant engagement across the organization.

2. Meg Kausch provided administrative updates for the TAC.

Introductions

- Meg introduced Kellie Shaw, joining for her first meeting with the TAC and her role as Director of Equity.
- Meg introduced Aimee Bagdesarian as a new member of the TAC, after she was selected as Home Forward's Tenant Commissioner. Meg shared that Aimee went through a selection and interview process that mirrored what TAC members went through to be selected. Meg shared that Aimee was ultimately not selected by City Council and the Mayor of Portland to sit on Home Forward's Board of Commissioners, and due to her substantial leadership role as a tenant and current experience as a commissioner on Welcome Home Coalition's board, she is being appointed as a TAC member outside of typical TAC appointments and terms.

Administrative Announcements

- Frank Culbertson and Raven Smith attended TAC Annual Report at Home Forward Senior Leadership meeting in July and shared the work of the TAC over the last year and their introduction video.
- Carla Williams Frison, Melissa McClellan, Megan Sahim, Raven Smith and Aimee Bagdesarian all attended HUD Section 3 Event in July.
- Sarah Lawrence organized a NARCAN training at her apartment building, which led to other tenants getting trained. One tenant then led a NARCAN training at a different Home Forward building, and more folks received supplies and trainings as a result. Meg noted that tenants can receive NARCAN supplies provided by Home Forward's safety department.

3. Subcommittee Time

Meg Kausch ended announcements and prompted TAC members to move into their 3 subcommittee groups to meet and discuss current projects.

After subcommittees met and discussed, members came back together to review what had been discussed in individual groups.

- 3PM subcommittee had finalized their Tenant Communication Guide and is now identifying a new project to focus on.
- Safety subcommittee had finalized their HF Emergency Readiness Guide and Home Forward IFS team interns are beginning to post the guide at every Home Forward building. In the future, both the Tenant Communication Guide and the Emergency Readiness Guide will be reviewed annually and re-posted annually if necessary using policy briefings that accompany both of these documents. Safety subcommittee will introduce a new policy proposal they have begun outlining.
- Voucher-holder subcommittee is reviewing the policy proposal for updating Home Forward's Customer Service procedures and programs.
 - Debbie noted that the Equity Department offered their supports for the resolution process of Customer Service updates, and being a final contact for helping tenants feel supported in getting what they need.
 - Meg restated that every communication or contact that comes in from tenants would be tracked and documented when an immediate response or support cannot be provided. In other words, when a staff member has to pass off the request to other staff or departments within the organization, a customer service ticket would be opened, tracked, notated and responded to in order to ensure full customer service supports.
- Meg also noted additional options for 3PM subcommittee to explore, including reviewing Home Forward's existing contract with third party property management companies.
- Raven took time to shoutout Shay and Debbie for their support with completing the TAC Introduction Video to the Senior Leadership team.

4. Additional Announcements – Staffing Changes

Frank noted that Juli Garvey has taken a new position at Home Forward. Meg reviewed the recent Property Management staffing changes, and how this impacts Juli taking on a new role and title at Home Forward as Director of Property and Asset Management. Meg explained that Juli's role will be similar to what she currently does, but that she will be a leader over both Home Forward managed properties and third party managed properties. Meg reflected with the TAC around Juli's offer to regularly attend TAC meetings and hear feedback. TAC members shared thoughts on having staff into their meeting space, expectations for being there and receiving feedback as it is intended – to create positive change at the organization. Kellie offered for TAC members to outline staff guidelines for being in their space so that staff have an understanding of how TAC time is used and how tenants hope for staff to engage in their space. Meg initiated adding these guidelines to the meeting agenda for next month's meeting.

Meg also announced TAC liaisons from each Home Forward department to support TAC work, proposals, ideas and discussions moving forward. These individuals would help support timely responses, meaningful engagement and dedicated efforts to help with TAC projects moving forward at Home Forward.

5. TAC Policy Proposal – Emergency Evacuation Assistance Program

Meg invited Frank to introduce his work on the Emergency Evacuation Action Program. Discussion began by asking TAC members if they knew what an Evacuation Chair was, Corpus explained what an Evacuation Chair is and what it is used for. Meg noted that Home Forward's IFS team has initiated Evacuation Chairs being installed in all Home Forward buildings. Frank described the process of using Evacuation Chairs, including the pros, cons and inadequacies of the chairs. Frank read a legal disclosure of what the EEAP does and does not cover, and addresses Home Forward's liability in keeping tenants safe.

Frank explained the process of what the EEAP would include – meaning that Home Forward would partner with willing tenants to list and update their information for First Responders to have access to during an emergency, so that they are aware of tenants that would need support in exiting the building. Frank noted that a similar program has been implemented in Ohio, and that he will be working on connecting with these folks to learn more about this program and what can be implemented at Home Forward. TAC members Traci and Raven shared about fire safety concerns and noted the importance of clarity of Home Forward's responsibilities during emergencies so that tenants know what Home Forward is and is not able to help with. Meg asked the TAC to review the policy in its entirety and be prepared to provide feedback and continue working on this project to finalize it and then present to Home Forward staff and leadership.

Meg Kausch adjourned the meeting.
