



José G. Pérez
City of Milwaukee Common Council

June 26, 2024

The Honorable,
Mayor Cavalier Johnson
City Hall, Room 201
200 E. Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

RE: Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee

Dear Mayor Johnson:

The situation at the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) is no longer tenable. Our 12,000 fellow citizens who reside in HACM properties deserve to live in a clean and safe environment in which they are treated with dignity and respect by HACM management, the Board, and staff. We believe the time has come for all those connected to this agency to offer recommendations, appropriate to their areas of expertise, to place HACM on a better course. It is with this in mind that we make the following recommendations, focused on governance, compliance, and transparency.

As we are sure you would agree, the need to nominate enough people to bring the HACM Board to its full complement of seven members is urgent, and that action is long overdue. Yet despite that urgency, we would caution you that this nomination process needs to be both collaborative and intentional. Naming three new members without first stepping back and examining how HACM got to where it is today, and without devising a plan—in collaboration with the Common Council—for how to avoid the pitfalls into which HACM, under the oversight of the current Board, has fallen, would be unwise and premature.

With this in mind, we call on you not to advance your slate of future nominees until our leadership has had the opportunity to discuss with you what strengths, collectively, a fully-staffed HACM Board should have.

We would note in that vein, that members of the Council recently sought out the names and specific plans you have for the Board, prior to the names of the nominees being made public. It was unfortunate that instead of working in the spirit of collaboration, allowing for some continuity between the nominating and appointing bodies of the prospective nominees, Council members learned the names of the prospective nominees via a recent email communication from your office. The undersigned members had hoped to



have a substantive discussion regarding the background of potential nominees prior to their names being put forward. An ideal list, in our thinking, would have included, per HACM's historical make-up and by-laws, the consideration of nominating a council member and two resident members. Furthermore, given the complex topics commonly heard by the Board, we also recommend that at least one of the nominees be an attorney well-versed in public-housing development and land-use law as well as someone with a background in public safety who is familiar with the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.

To ensure that those nominated are independent critical-thinkers who view HACM residents as their number one priority, the confirmation process will be assigned to the Steering and Rules Committee. This matter, and getting the Board composition "right", is of critical importance to us. Given the issues expressed by residents, including but not limited to, safety concerns, tenant/landlord accounting issues, limited access to Board members/management, and general maintenance concerns regarding the grounds and housing units, we believe the Steering and Rules Committee is the appropriate body at this time. It should be noted that prior to the formal confirmation process occurring, Board nominees are encouraged to meet with existing HACM resident advisory boards/committees to learn about the concerns and priorities of residents.

We very much want HACM to succeed. A new and reinvigorated HACM board should have the freedom to pursue any and all corrective actions needed to chart a better course for the agency. This includes evaluating, and reconsidering—if need be—those in positions of leadership at HACM. Frankly, for the good of rebuilding the trust of residents and taxpayers alike, HACM must succeed. We are ready to help in any way possible, and we look forward to you embracing the spirit of collaboration needed for us to reach our shared goal. Your partnership is wanted, needed, and vital to HACM's future success.

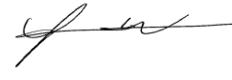
Sincerely,



Jonathan Brostoff
Alderman, 3rd District



Robert J. Bauman
Alderman, 4th District



Lamont Westmoreland
Alderman, 5th District



DiAndre Jackson
Alderman, 7th District



Sharlen Moore
Alderwoman, 10th District



Peter Burgelis
Alderman, 11th District



José G. Pérez
Alderman, 12th District



Scott P. Spiker
Alderman, 13th District



Marina Dimitrijevic
Alderwoman, 14th District