



MAYOR CAVALIER JOHNSON
CITY OF MILWAUKEE

June 27, 2024

Dear Common Council Members,

Thank you for your letter dated June 26, 2024. I welcome the spirit of cooperation you express. I am also confident that your body shares my priority in ensuring quality housing for all of our residents.

Although the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) is not a City department, I want to be very clear about how seriously I take my responsibility to ensuring HACM's success. I have held repeated meetings with HACM leaders; I have met with HUD officials on multiple occasions; I have monitored the work our Department of Neighborhood Services has taken on to address safety and compliance issues at HACM properties; and, without fanfare or posturing, I have visited HACM properties in recent weeks. These visits took place without advance notice to HACM leaders or property managers; I spoke with randomly selected residents; and, I heard a range of sentiments expressed by those residents. I have worked to identify a national expert in housing authority operations, who each of my nominees have expressed support in bringing on board in an advisory role. Many months ago, I had directed my staff to work with HACM, the HACM Board of Commissioners and HUD to make the issues you underlined in your letter a priority.

HACM must promptly resolve the issues it faces. It is essential that the leaders of city government fulfill their role, which at this time must prioritize appointing and confirming qualified board members.

The city's collaborative appointment process is defined in state and federal law, and they lay out my responsibility to submit quality candidates to the Common Council. It is then the Council's duty to review those candidates and vote on confirmation.

I have focused on filling the vacant Housing Authority board positions with highly qualified individuals who will bring valuable experiences to the HACM board. My staff and I have vetted and considered numerous candidates, and I have personally met with the nominees I intend to present to the Common Council. While I welcome having a Council member among my nominees, it is not a requirement and I have found it difficult to find a member who is willing to sit on the board. In fact, over the past few months I have broached the possibility of serving on the HACM board with a number of Council members who signed the letter you recently sent, and I regret those individuals did not express interest.

The nominees I will send you have backgrounds in financial matters and successfully running other housing authorities. They bring important perspectives that reflect the concerns of HACM residents. Most importantly, they bring a passion for making our Housing Authority a top-quality operation and prioritizing the residents above all else.

The challenges facing HACM are complicated, and imposing simple solutions is not the best path forward. I am committed to finding lasting resolutions to these challenges, and the nominees I will submit share that commitment.

To fully restore HACM's operations, facilities, and finances, it will take serious attention and direction from the organization's board. I ask Council members to act promptly to confirm the board nominees I will submit so that the remedial work will continue at the fastest pace possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cavalier Johnson", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Cavalier Johnson