

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON
550 MEETING STREET
CHARLESTON, SC 29403
MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
February 24, 2025

The Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston met for a Regular Board Meeting on Monday, the 24th of February, 2025. Mr. Herb Partlow, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and the following were in attendance:

PRESENT

Mr. Herb Partlow, Chairman
Ms. Sharon Wigfall, Vice Chair
Ms. Carol Jackson
Ms. Kathy Nelson
Ms. Garcia Williams
Mr. Gregory Voigt
Mr. Nick Schumacher

The following were also present: Mr. Arthur S. Milligan, Jr., President and CEO; Mr. Alex McFarlane, Chief Operating Officer; Ms. Aris Ferguson, General Counsel; Mr. Brad Walbeck, Chief Human Resources Officer; Mr. Pete Sherman, Director of Development; Mr. Jeremy Erling, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Gabriel Bluestein, Chief Information Officer; Mr. Vernon Graham, Security and Public Information Officer; Ms. Diana Hendrix, Organization Training Director; Mr. Francis Smith, Director of Facilities/RAD Development; Ms. Calix Stewart, Housing Services Manager; Ms. Tammy Davender-Davis, Property Manager, AMP 20; Ms. Khala Simmons, Property Manager, AMP 30; Ms. LaQuaintez Gadson, Assistant Property Manager AMP 30; Ms. Gloria Martin, Property Manager AMP 40; Ms. Rayda Dupree-Scott, Enston Home Property Manager; Ms. Adrienne Riley, Relocation/RAD Coordinator; Ms. Cordelia Davis, Quality Control Manager; Ms. Kathy Simmons, Executive Assistant and Recorder; Ms. Kerry Welch, TRIO; Ms. Lauren Brownrigg, TRIO; Ms. Jenny Dennis, TRIO; Ms. Jessica Munday, TRIO; Ms. Shaniqua Washington, TRIO; Mr. Ward Mungo, WMC; and Mr. Bo Smith, WMC/LBS

Chairman Partlow commenced the Communications segment by announcing that while on February 11, 2020, both he and Vice-Chair Ms. Sharon Wigfall were reappointed to the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston Board of Commissioners for an additional five-year term, the Mayor had decided not to extend their appointments beyond the expiration of their current term on February 11, 2025. Chairman Partlow emphasized a need for leadership continuity and the extensive tenure and experience both he and Vice-Chair Wigfall have contributed to the Board. At present, the Mayor has not appointed successors for either position. Commissioner Carol Jackson and President & CEO Art Milligan expressed their gratitude for the dedication, leadership, and contributions of Commissioners Partlow and Wigfall to the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston.

The Chair moved to approve the minutes from the Special Annual Board Meeting held on January 29, 2025. There being no corrections or additions, Mr. Nick Schumacher made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 29th meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Carol Jackson. Following no further discussion, the Chairman called for a vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Partlow proceeded to the Internal Reports section and invited TRIO, the Housing Authority's public relations firm, to present their six-month update. It was noted that the one-year contract with TRIO is set to conclude at the end of February 2025, with Accounting Manager Lauren Brownrigg informing the Commissioners of the option for a second-year extension. Ms. Brownrigg presented a slide deck outlining TRIO's recent contributions to the Housing Authority. TRIO expressed interest in collaborating on the Housing Authority's 90th-anniversary celebrations and outlined ongoing initiatives, including the development of a new property book. Additionally, TRIO is in the process of creating a press kit and an infographic, both of which are expected to be completed in the coming weeks, to enhance community awareness of affordable housing initiatives. TRIO's analytics system provides insights into audience engagement by tracking content viewership, with the inaugural newsletter achieving an above-average click-through rate of 5.8%, demonstrating strong engagement. Looking ahead, TRIO plans to expand social media activity, refine content repurposing strategies from newsletters to digital platforms, and broaden the newsletter's reach to include external stakeholders in addition to residents. TRIO also raised the possibility of a rebranding initiative, potentially including a name change to improve visibility. The Commissioners will collaborate with CHA Administration to evaluate the firm's performance and determine whether to proceed with the renewal of TRIO's contract.

The Chairman invited Mr. Arthur Milligan to provide his updates as President and CEO. Mr. Milligan reported that he, along with Aris, Alex, and Francis, attended a meeting with Burke Ballers, a community group comprised of Burke High School alumni advocating for Gadsden Green. The purpose of the meeting was to engage with the group, reaffirm CHA's commitment to community improvement through the Gadsden Green project, and provide assurances that no residents would be displaced as a result of the development. Mr. Milligan also took the opportunity to express his appreciation to the Commissioners for their dedication and contributions to CHA. With no further questions regarding his report, the Chairman invited Mr. Alex McFarlane to present his updates.

Mr. McFarlane reported that the Outstanding Tenant Account Receivables (TAR's) for January 2025 were included in the Board Packet. He noted that the transition to the YARDI system has led to fluctuations in key metrics. Additionally, concerns were raised regarding the completeness of file transfers during the transition, indicating that the system is not yet fully optimized. Despite these challenges, the team reported strong performance in handling work order requests and completions. However, due to manual data entry, discrepancies have been observed in the reporting of work orders and their completion status. Acknowledging the ongoing adjustment period, the team expects to refine processes and enhance reporting accuracy in the coming months. With no further questions regarding Mr. McFarlane's report, the Chairman invited Ms. Aris Ferguson to provide her update.

Ms. Ferguson reported that the motion to dismiss the ejectment action against Mr. Norfleet was granted due to his failure to appear at the appeals hearing on February 18th. There was also a brief discussion regarding whether Commissioners would be receiving CHA emails, with a decision to be made at a later date. With no further questions on Ms. Ferguson's report, the Chairman called for Mr. Peter Sherman's update.

Mr. Sherman provided an update on the 4% tax credit application for Meeting Street Manor, noting that a response was expected by the end of February; however, no update had been received yet. He also reported that the response for the 9% set-aside tax credit related to the Meeting Street Manor Extension is anticipated by the end of March. Additionally, he informed the Board that CHA is now working with the City Collective design team for the Cooper River

Courts/Morrison Station project. The Kiawah Homes project continues to progress well under the leadership of Mr. Francis Smith. Mr. Sherman then introduced Mr. Ward Mungo to present an update on 275 Huger Street. Mr. Mungo reported that the design team is addressing concerns related to the building's footprint and its sensitivity to flooding, emphasizing the importance of a reduced footprint for structural soundness. The project's architect, Mr. Matt Davis, is preparing to submit a revised design packet to the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) staff by Thursday, incorporating recent feedback. Following Mr. Mungo's update, Mr. Nick Schumacher raised concerns regarding significant deviations in the project's design compared to the original agreement, expressing a lack of confidence in the current budget management. He also highlighted that the revised design does not reflect key principles discussed in previous meetings, particularly concerning the building's front entrance and overall aesthetic. Mr. Schumacher noted that the new design appears overly institutional and may not align with the architectural expectations of the Board, putting its approval at risk. Additionally, he expressed concerns about the potential waste of time and resources if the design does not align with budget constraints. In response, Mr. Mungo assured the Board that they will follow up on the architectural and civil drawing concerns to ensure the project progresses effectively. With no further questions regarding the Development Report, Chairman Partlow thanked Mr. Mungo for his update and invited Mr. Jeremy Erling to provide his report.

Mr. Erling began his report by addressing the significant net loss for the Central Office Cost Center. As a result, a decision was made to reevaluate the allocation of expenses between the Central Office Cost Center and the AMPs. The recalculated allocations will be reflected in next month's report. Additionally, Mr. Erling noted that an additional \$34,000 was received in February, which will be recorded under the administrative fee income line. This adjustment will impact the quarterly reconciliation through September 2024. With no further questions regarding Mr. Erling's report, the Chairman invited Mr. Brad Walbeck to provide his update.

Mr. Walbeck reported that two employees, each with 28 years of service, retired last month. Their departures have been recorded as terminations. Chairman Partlow commended Mr. Walbeck for his continued efforts in developing the HR report. With no further questions, Chairman Partlow requested a motion to approve the Internal Reports.

Mr. Nick Schumacher made a motion to approve the Internal Reports as submitted, which was seconded by Ms. Carol Jackson. Following no additional inquiries, the Chairman called for a vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution #5158, Approval of Re-Roofing at 550 Meeting Street

Mr. Francis Smith presented Resolution #5158, which seeks approval to re-roof the CHA Administrative Building at 550 Meeting Street. The Housing Authority of the City of Charleston (CHA) received five bids from contractors on February 19, 2025. Bone Dry Roofing Company is the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, with a base bid of \$101,007.00. The contractor's credentials were verified and meets CHA requirements. CHA has worked with this contractor on projects with similar scope and cost and has been satisfied with their performance. Chairman Partlow called for a motion to approve Resolution #5158. Ms. Carol Jackson moved to approve the resolution, and Mr. Nick Schumacher seconded the motion. With no further questions, the Chair called for a vote, which resulted in unanimous approval.

Resolution #5159, Approval of Re-Roofing at 545 Meeting Street

Mr. Francis Smith presented Resolution #5159, which seeks approval to re-roof the CHA Maintenance Facility at 545 Meeting Street. On February 19, 2025, the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston (CHA) received five bids from contractors. Roofing USA is the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, with a base bid of \$287,200.00. The contractor's credentials were verified and met CHA's requirements. CHA has worked with this contractor on projects with a similar scope. The contractor has not completed any projects within this cost amount. However, CHA has been satisfied with the contractor's work and is confident that the contractor will be able to complete the work according to CHA's standards. Ms. Garcia Williams moved to approve Resolution #5159, and Ms. Carol Jackson seconded the motion. With no further questions, the Chair called for a vote, which resulted in unanimous approval.

Resolution #5160, Approval of Grievance Hearing Officers

Ms. Aris Ferguson presented Resolution #5160, regarding the approval of Grievance Hearing Officers. She reported that approximately 50 law students enrolled in a two-day training course at the Charleston School of Law to serve as hearing officers for administrative hearings related to low-income public housing and the voucher program. These hearings provide residents the opportunity to contest adverse actions, with law students serving as impartial hearing officers in a courtroom-style setting, including the presentation of evidence and witness testimonies. The participating students include first, second, and third-year students, with priority given to third-year students. Mr. Greg Voigt moved for approval of Resolution #5160, and Ms. Garcia Williams seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the Chair called for a vote, and the resolution was unanimously approved.

CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION PERIOD

The Chairman moved to Citizen's Participation Period and there was none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Partlow motioned to enter an Executive Session to discuss the details of a potential contract. Ms. Carol Jackson seconded the motion. With no questions, the Chair called for a vote, which resulted in unanimous approval.

Following the Executive Session, Mr. Partlow announced that no vote took place and no formal action was taken.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Being no further business to come before the Board, the Chairman adjourned the Regular Board Meeting of February 29th, 2025 at 8:03pm.