

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON
550 MEETING STREET
CHARLESTON, SC 29403
MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
APRIL 28, 2025

The Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston met for a Regular Board Meeting on Monday, the 28th of April, 2025. Mr. Gregory Voigt, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and the following were in attendance:

PRESENT

Mr. Gregory Voigt, Chairman
Ms. Garcia Williams, Vice Chair
Ms. Carol Jackson
Ms. Kathy Nelson
Mr. William "Bill" Hecht
Mr. Alvin Johnson
Mr. Nick Schumacher (via Zoom)

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; Ms. Priscilla Waring, Procurement and Contracts Manager; Mr. Vernon Graham, Security and Public Information Officer; Mr. Xavier Hampton, Public Relations & Social Media Manager; Mr. Francis Smith, Director of Facilities/RAD Development; Ms. Rosemary Jenkins, Housing Services Assistant Manager; Ms. Tammy Davender-Davis, Property Manager, AMP 20; Ms. Khala Simmons, Property Manager, AMP 30; Ms. Chantel Stewart, Assistant Property Manager AMP 40; Ms. Rayda Dupree-Scott, Enston Home Property Manager; Ms. Patricia Stewart, RAD; Ms. Cordelia Davis, Quality Control Manager; Ms. Kathy Simmons, Executive Assistant and Recorder; Ms. Kerry Welch, TRIO; Jordan Jones, Integral; and Redding Dishea, resident at Robert Mills Manor.

The Chairman proceeded to the Communications section of the agenda and noted that there were no items to report. He then welcomed the two newly appointed Commissioners and invited them to introduce themselves, share their backgrounds, and discuss their reasons for joining the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston's board.

The Chair moved to approve the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting held on March 24, 2025. There being no corrections or additions, Ms. Carol Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 24th meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Bill Hecht. Following no further discussion, the Chairman called for a vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Chairman proceeded to the Internal Reports section and invited President and CEO Mr. Arthur Milligan to provide updates. Mr. Milligan began by welcoming Bill Hecht and Alvin Johnson as the newest commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston. Mr. Milligan highlighted the Housing Authority's recent participation in the March of Dimes "March for Babies" on Saturday, April 19, underscoring the organization's continued commitment to supporting maternal and infant health. Fundraising efforts will continue throughout May to further this cause. Mr. Milligan also noted ongoing preparations for the Housing Authority's 90th Anniversary

Celebration, emphasizing the team's dedication to planning a meaningful event that honors the agency's legacy, celebrates the community, and looks toward the future. In operational updates, he shared that staff recently met with AMCS to review the current property portfolio and discuss upcoming rehabilitation efforts. The meeting focused on evaluating existing assets, identifying priority improvements, and outlining a path forward in alignment with strategic objectives. Continued collaboration will ensure steady progress and effective implementation. Additionally, the Housing Authority is working with the Green Heart Project to seek funding for renovations at Memorial Hall. This partnership is designed to leverage shared resources in support of critical facility upgrades through community-driven initiatives. Mr. Milligan concluded his report by affirming the Housing Authority's ongoing collaboration with developers and the City to maximize the value and potential of 275 Huger Street. The goal remains to achieve the most beneficial outcome for both the community and the Housing Authority. With no further questions regarding Mr. Milligan's report, the Chairman invited Mr. Gabe Bluestein to provide his update.

Mr. Gabe Bluestein reported that he had no additional updates beyond his submitted report, except to note progress with the transition to the new software system. Since January, over 4,000 residents and approximately 8,700 applicants have registered through the Housing Authority's online portals. Vice Chair Williams revisited the topic of email addresses for Commissioners. Mr. Bluestein suggested that due to HUD regulations, using generic email accounts instead of @chacity.org addresses may offer advantages in terms of training and cybersecurity. This will be discussed further offline. Commissioner Hecht inquired about resident surveys. It was clarified that TRIO had distributed resident surveys a few months prior. Commissioner Hecht requested that a summary report of the survey results be provided to the Board. With no further questions regarding Mr. Bluestein's report, the Chairman invited Mr. Alex McFarlane to provide his update.

Mr. Alex McFarlane indicated that he had no additional comments beyond his submitted report. Vice Chair Williams raised a concern about inconsistencies in the color coding across different reports, noting that such discrepancies could cause confusion. She emphasized the importance of adopting a standardized color scheme to enhance clarity and readability. Vice Chair Williams also requested that Marketing & Outreach activities be included in the Board's monthly reports. Commissioner Carol Jackson expressed interest in having a reference guide or "cheat sheet" to better understand the various types of vouchers, including the Ross Grant, which was noted as having a small number associated with it. With no further questions, the Chairman invited Ms. Aris Ferguson to present her update.

Ms. Aris Ferguson provided the Board with an update on the upcoming 90th Anniversary Celebration. She reported that the team is preparing a press release and inviting local media outlets to cover the milestone event. Additionally, social media content is being developed to highlight and document the celebration. Ms. Ferguson also shared that the Charleston School of Law is launching a Housing Law and Policy Institute, which will engage law students in addressing key housing issues. She has been invited to co-teach a Maymester course on housing law, which will be offered for the first time this year. She expressed optimism that this new partnership could lead to meaningful support and innovative solutions for the Housing Authority's initiatives. Ms. Ferguson informed the Board of two recent FOIA requests. The first, submitted by Michael Allison of Live 5 News, seeks budget information for the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston for the past two fiscal years. The Housing Authority will respond to the request in full, excluding any information exempt under FOIA guidelines. The second request, submitted by Bowen National Research, pertains to an affordable housing study in Charleston. It includes inquiries regarding vouchers, service areas, waitlists, and demographic data. The Housing Authority will fully comply with this request. With no further questions, the Chairman invited Mr. Peter Sherman to deliver his update.

Mr. Peter Sherman reported that there are currently two design proposals under consideration for the 275 Huger Street project. Due to cost concerns associated with the original design, an alternative design was developed. The higher-than-anticipated expenses tied to the original concept may require a reassessment of the project's design to ensure financial feasibility. Mr. Sherman noted that Charleston County has committed \$1.75 million in funding for the project, but the funds are time-sensitive and must be secured promptly to avoid forfeiture. He clarified that the original design was created by architect Eddie Bello, while the newer design was developed by Davis Architects. Mr. Sherman also corrected a statement from his written report, explaining that contrary to what was previously stated, submitting the newer design to the Board of Architectural Review (B.A.R.) would not automatically invalidate the original design. With no further questions regarding the Development Report, the Chairman invited Mr. Jeremy Erling to present his report.

Mr. Erling began his report by addressing AMP 20's net loss, explaining that it was due to several one-time expenses incurred during the month. He noted that financial performance should return closer to budget projections next month. Regarding AMP 40, Mr. Erling reiterated previous discussions about a revenue shortfall. This is primarily due to operating funds tied to a capital grant that have not yet been received. Once those funds become available, revenue is expected to align more closely with the budget. Chairman Voigt inquired whether the issue stemmed from inaccurate budget estimates or lower-than-expected rent collections. Mr. Sherman responded that it is unclear at this time and could be a combination of budgeting discrepancies, lower collections, or other factors. One contributing issue may be Meeting Street Manor, where units are being held in preparation for RAD conversion. These units are not currently generating rental income, which may account for roughly 30% of the rent collection shortfall. Mr. Erling then discussed the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program which is structured to operate at breakeven—matching expenditures with allocated funding. However, delays in funding calculations or disbursements can result in temporary discrepancies. He noted that either HUD will catch up with payments, or the agency will need to request additional funds. With no further questions, the Chairman invited Mr. Brad Walbeck to present his update.

Mr. Walbeck reported that over 40% of employee terminations were related to attendance issues, primarily due to "no call, no show" incidents. He emphasized this statistic to underscore the importance of understanding the underlying causes of employee departures. While feedback from former employees often cited personal reasons for leaving, Mr. Walbeck expressed concern that the high rate of attendance-related terminations might reflect broader organizational or workplace challenges. He noted that the nature of the work contributes to high turnover, particularly within the maintenance staff, and suggested the need for improved retention strategies. With a total workforce of approximately 115 employees, the reported turnover rate provides important context for ongoing HR planning. With no further questions, Chairman Voigt requested a motion to approve the Internal Reports.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution #5168, Approval of Tenant Accounts Receivable Write-Off

Mr. Alex McFarlane presented Resolution #5168, which seeks approval for the write-off of Tenant Accounts Receivable in the amount of \$3264.16. Commissioner Schumacher raised a concern about the lack of historical context in the write-off reports suggesting that a 12-month overview of Tenant Account Receivables be included in future reporting. Ms. Garcia Williams moved to approve the resolution, and Mr. Nick Schumacher and Ms. Kathy Nelson seconded the motion. With no further questions, the Chair called for a vote, which resulted in unanimous approval.

Resolution #5169, Approval of Interior Painting, Repairs and Flooring at 193 Congress Street

Ms. Priscilla Waring presented Resolution #5169, regarding the approval of Interior Painting, Repairs and Flooring at 193 Congress Street, Job number- 250404. Maintain of The Lowcountry, LLC is the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, with a base bid of \$123,800.00. The contractor's credentials were verified and meets CHA requirements. Mr. Nick Schumacher moved for approval of Resolution #5169, and Ms. Carol Jackson and Ms. Garcia Williams both seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the Chair called for a vote, and the resolution was unanimously approved.

Resolution #5170, Approval of Community Investment Services Programs of FHLB of Atlanta

Mr. Pete Sherman presented Resolution #5170, seeking approval to establish an account with the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta to apply for \$1.25 million in funding for renovations at Meeting Street Manor. He noted that this is the agency's first time applying for this grant and that the application process is being supported by Baker Tilly. If successful, the same grant program may be utilized at 275 Huger Street. Mr. Nick Schumacher moved to approve the resolution, and Ms. Carol Jackson seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the Chair called for a vote. The resolution was unanimously approved.

Resolution #5171, Approval of Gadsden Green Master Development Agreement

Ms. Aris Ferguson presented Resolution #5171, seeking approval of the Gadsden Green Master Development Agreement (MDA). She noted that the Finance Committee had reviewed the agreement and recommended it be forwarded to the Board for consideration. Ms. Ferguson introduced Mr. Jordan Jones, who was in attendance to respond to questions. Under the proposed agreement, Integral will be responsible for all pre-development activities. The Housing Authority's financial responsibility will be limited to covering the cost of the Choice Neighborhood Grant Consultant. Upon execution of the development agreement, the next step will be to engage the selected consultant, Nina Liou, to support the application for the Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant. The development timeline is projected at 18 to 24 months, with clearly defined milestones to ensure accountability and maintain the Board's confidence. Integral's community engagement strategy includes hosting multiple resident meetings, which are essential to the Choice Neighborhood and Implementation Grant processes. Financial compensation to the Housing Authority will be structured as a ground lease, paid in three installments: 50% at financial closing, 25% upon construction completion, and 20% at stabilization. Stabilization is currently defined as 75% occupancy, although that threshold may be adjusted depending on investor requirements. The agreement includes a termination for convenience clause, allowing the Housing Authority to exit the agreement at any time. It also grants the Housing Authority a right of first offer should a portion of interest in the project be sold. Commissioner Bill Hecht raised concerns regarding the clarity of the agreement, specifically related to the right of first offer and the absence of clearly defined performance milestones. He emphasized that these areas need to be addressed prior to Board approval. He also noted that the agreement, as reviewed, lacked sufficient detail to allow developers to proceed efficiently. Following discussion, the group decided

to table Resolution #5171 until the May meeting to allow time for revisions and additional communication among stakeholders. Mr. Gregory Voigt moved to table the resolution, and Ms. Garcia Williams seconded the motion. The Chair called for a vote, and the motion to table was unanimously approved. A follow-up meeting was requested within the next two weeks to ensure continued progress ahead of the next Finance Committee meeting. Participants acknowledged the need for informal meetings to work through outstanding issues and finalize the agreement.

Resolution #5172, Approval of Interior Painting, Repairs and Flooring at 10 Margaret Street

Ms. Priscilla Waring presented Resolution #5172, regarding the approval of Interior Painting, Repairs and Flooring at 10 Margaret Street, Job number- 250408. Howell and Howell Contractors, Inc. submitted the lowest responsive and responsible bid, with a base bid of \$215,500.00. 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. Ms. Carol Jackson moved for approval of Resolution #5169, and Mr. Nick Schumacher 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 opened the Citizen's Participation Period. Mr. Redding Dishea, a resident of Robert Mills Manor for 18 years, addressed the Board to express concerns regarding the lack of clarity surrounding apartment allocation. He specifically inquired about the number of units that would be designated as market-rate, working-class, and low-income, particularly in light of recent media reports. The Chairman responded by affirming that the process is designed to preserve housing opportunities for current residents, as the RAD conversion moves forward.

Being no further business to come before the Board, the Chairman adjourned the Regular Board Meeting of April 28th, 2025 at 7:01pm.