

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON
550 MEETING STREET
CHARLESTON, SC 29403
MINUTES OF SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
AUGUST 31, 2026

The Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston met for a Special Board Meeting on Monday, the 31st of August 2026. Mr. Gregory Voigt, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:34pm and the following were in attendance:

PRESENT

Mr. Gregory Voigt, Chairman
Ms. Garcia Williams, Vice Chair
Mr. Nick Schumacher (via Teams)
Ms. Carol Jackson
Ms. Kathy Nelson
Mr. Alvin Johnson (via Teams)
Mr. Ken Grimes

NOT PRESENT

The following were also present: Mr. Nathan F. Simms, Jr., President and CEO; Ms. Debra Stephens, Chief Housing & Real Estate Officer; Ms. Aris Ferguson, General Counsel; Mr. Brad Walbeck, Chief Human Resources Officer; Mr. Jeremy Erling, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Gabriel Bluestein, Chief Information Officer; Mr. Lester M. Simpson, Director of Development; Ms. Priscilla Waring, Procurement & Contracts Manager; Ms. Calix Stewart, Director of Housing Services; Ms. Cordelia Davis, Interim Director of Property Management; Ms. Khala Simmons, Property Manager, AMP 30; Ms. Rayda Dupree-Scott, Enston Homes Property Manager; Mr. Zach Messier, Capital Funds Manager; Ms. Susan Chambers, Warehouse Manager; Ms. Kathy Simmons, Executive Assistant & Recorder; Ms. Jessica Munday, TRIO; Ms. Mia CaraDonna, TRIO; Mr. Jordan Jones, Integral; Mr. Daryl Jones, Integral (via Teams); Mr. Redding O'Shea, Robert Mills Manor Resident; Ms. Brenda Gradney, 670 King Street Resident; Ms. Barbara Ingram, 670 King Street Resident; Ms. Tracy Broughton, 670 King Street Resident; and Mr. Avis F. Thompson, NAACP.

COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman Voigt noted that Vice Chair Williams expressed her sincere appreciation to the Board and the Housing Authority for the expressions of sympathy and support extended to her and her family following the recent loss of her brother, Joseph.

Commissioner Carol Jackson requested that the Board recognize the success of the 2026 Transformation Forum and formally acknowledge and thank staff for the interdepartmental teamwork and collaboration that contributed to the success of the event. Chairman Voigt echoed Commissioner Jackson's remarks and expressed his appreciation to staff for their efforts.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

The following meeting minutes were presented for approval:

- Regular Board Meeting – July 27, 2026
- Special Board Meeting – August 18, 2026

Commissioner Carol Jackson moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Ken Grimes seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the Chairman called for a vote, and the motion carried unanimously.

NOTICE REGARDING AUGUST 18, 2026, SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Although notice of the Special Board Meeting was published in *The Post and Courier*, it was subsequently determined that the meeting notice and agenda were not posted on the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston's public website or at the Agency's principal office at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting, as required by the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), specifically S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-80(A).

In an abundance of caution and to ensure full transparency and compliance with applicable public notice requirements, the Board reconsidered and took new votes at the properly noticed August 31, 2026, Special Board Meeting on the matters previously considered, *Resolution #5227, Authorization to Amend the Morrison Station Master Development Agreement (MDA) with Integral Development, LLC*, and *Resolution #5229, Authorization of CEO to Execute Settlement Agreement Regarding 275 Huger Street*.

CITY OF CHARLESTON MAYORAL REMARKS

Mayor William S. Cogswell, Jr. addressed the Board regarding the City's affordable housing and redevelopment initiatives, including Project 3500, coordination with CHA and Integral Development, LLC, development and design efforts, potential City resources, and the importance of improved communication and collaboration between the City and CHA.

Mayor Cogswell stated for the record that the City and his administration have no intention of forcing the Housing Authority into any partnership or development relationship. He noted, however, that the City has responsibilities to the public through its entitlement and design-review processes and must ensure that development within the City is of a quality that all parties can be proud of. The Mayor emphasized that the City wants to support and assist CHA, but that such efforts would not come at the expense of the design, quality, or integrity of the built environment. He reiterated that the City is prepared to be supportive and expressed his belief that CHA shares the City's commitment to high-quality development.

The Mayor further discussed the need for greater coordination between the City, CHA, and its development partners to avoid duplicating planning, design efforts, and expenditures. Discussion included the City's design-services procurement, Gadsden Green, Morrison Station, WestEdge, and potential opportunities for the City to provide resources or other assistance toward achieving the goals of Project 3500.

Mayor Cogswell also referenced a letter he had written to Chairman Voigt regarding the City's request for completion of the independent due-diligence review related to Mr. Simms' hiring. Chairman Voigt provided an update on the independent review being conducted by Parker Poe, including the collection and review of documents, interviews being conducted as part of the

process, and the Board's intention to make as much of the final report available to the public as legally permissible.

NOTICE REGARDING AMENDMENT OF AGENDA

Following Mayor William S. Cogswell, Jr.'s remarks and discussion, General Counsel Aris Hanchard Ferguson noted that, in accordance with South Carolina public meeting laws, the Board would need to amend the agenda by a two-thirds majority vote to formally include the Mayor's remarks and discussion and that no action could be taken on the matter added to the agenda.

Commissioner Carol Jackson made a motion to amend the agenda to include the Mayor's remarks and discussion, which was seconded by Vice Chair Garcia Williams. The motion was approved unanimously by the Board.

INTERNAL REPORTS

The Chairman proceeded to the Internal Reports portion of the agenda and recognized President and CEO Nathan F. Simms, Jr. to present his report. Mr. Simms recognized resident leaders and community representatives in attendance, and provided updates on recent community listening sessions, the Transformation Forum, partnership and development efforts, and matters involving 275 Huger Street. The Board then discussed recent public-meeting notice concerns. Mr. Simms advised that CHA had implemented a detailed internal Board Meeting Checklist addressing agenda preparation, distribution, posting, Board packet publication, and verification. The Board emphasized timely communication with Commissioners and strict compliance with public notice requirements.

NOTICE REGARDING MICROSOFT SERVICE OUTAGE

During the meeting, a widespread Microsoft service outage affected some participants' ability to access Microsoft Teams. Staff temporarily restarted the meeting connection and later advised that a notice would be posted to the website explaining the outage and that the meeting recording would also be made available to the public.

INTERNAL REPORTS (CONTINUED)

President and CEO Nathan F. Simms, Jr. introduced Debra Stephens as the Housing Authority's new Chief Housing and Real Estate Officer. Ms. Stephens subsequently introduced Cordelia Davis, Interim Director of Property Management, and Lester Simpson, Director of Real Estate Development and Acquisitions.

Chief Housing & Real Estate Officer Debra Stephens introduced Interim Director of Property Management Ms. Cordelia Davis, noting Ms. Davis' more than 30 years of leadership experience and her previous service as a CHA Property Manager and Portfolio Quality Control Manager. Ms. Stephens reported that responsibility for unit turns is transitioning to the Capital Fund Department and that Ms. Davis is spearheading Project HVAC, an eight-week initiative focused on HVAC repairs and preventive maintenance throughout the portfolio. During the first week of the initiative, staff completed 15 air-conditioning work orders and repaired nine compressors, with work continuing throughout additional properties. Ms. Stephens reported that 20 units were made ready

to lease in July and that 20 move-ins were completed out of 28 units available for leasing. She further reported that portfolio occupancy had reached approximately 92%. To strengthen maintenance operations, CHA is recruiting four HVAC professionals and has begun discussions with Trident Technical College regarding a potential partnership for training, internships, and the development of a workforce pipeline for future employees. Regarding the Housing Choice Voucher program, Ms. Stephens reported an HCV utilization rate of approximately 86%, with additional voucher utilization rates of 90% and 92% for other program components.

Ms. Stephens also introduced Director of Real Estate Development & Acquisitions, Mr. Lester Simpson and provided updates on CHA's current real estate development pipeline. Kiawah Homes had received its certificate of construction completion and entered the leasing phase; Athens Court, a 100% RAD conversion, was progressing through the RAD process; and Robert Mills Manor, a RAD blend with HUD financing, was beginning its closing process. Following the report, the Board acknowledged the recent improvements in property management and real estate operations and expressed appreciation for the positive trends reflected in the department's performance.

Chief Financial Officer Jeremy Erling presented the financial report and a preliminary overview of the proposed FY 2027 budget. Mr. Erling explained that the timing of the FY 2026 Capital Fund Grant significantly impacts current-year projections, as those funds are not yet available for drawdown. As a result, CHA anticipates utilizing the FY 2026 and FY 2027 Capital Fund Grants during the next fiscal year, affecting projected revenues for the Central Office Cost Center and Public Housing operations. He also reported that Public Housing utility expenses were running over budget, primarily due to water leaks and infrastructure issues identified at several properties. Regarding the Housing Choice Voucher program, Mr. Erling discussed HUD funding and reimbursement timing and noted that the department has maintained full staffing in recent months. He also reported on business activities and developer-fee revenue, including the receipt of approximately \$962,000 in developer fees following completion of a development project. Mr. Erling's preliminary FY 2027 budget included salary adjustments associated with staffing changes, an average 4% cost-of-living adjustment, potential adjustments resulting from a compensation study, an 18% pension contribution, increased insurance costs, and expenses associated with strategic planning and a new website. In response to Board questions, Mr. Erling clarified that the 4% cost-of-living adjustment was included for budgeting purposes and that individual increases would be subject to performance considerations. Mr. Erling also discussed anticipated developer-fee revenue associated with Robert Mills Manor, noting that the amount remains subject to change as the project moves closer to closing. He advised that the proposed FY 2027 budget would be discussed in greater detail and returned to the Board for final review and consideration.

General Counsel Aris Hanchard Ferguson reported on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) received from the City of Charleston regarding the potential placement of a stormwater pipe associated with the City's pump station project. Ms. Ferguson clarified that the MOU does not constitute an easement; rather, it memorializes the parties' understanding that, should the City's due diligence determine that the pipe must be located on CHA property, the parties would address and execute an appropriate easement at a later date. Ms. Ferguson also reported that CHA had posted an Associate Counsel position in response to the increasing workload of the Legal Department and the need for additional in-house legal support. She explained that filling the position would also provide continuity and coverage during her anticipated parental leave beginning in December, allowing sufficient time to hire and train the new Associate Counsel prior to her leave. Ms. Ferguson noted that CHA values its relationship with outside counsel but that additional in-house legal support would be beneficial to the organization.

Chief Human Resources Officer Brad Walbeck reported that employee turnover remained low during the month, with only one employee separation. He also provided an update on staffing and recruitment efforts, noting the addition of several new employees and ongoing recruitment for several open positions. Mr. Walbeck expressed confidence in CHA's continued progress in filling vacancies and maintaining workforce stability.

Chief Information Officer Gabe Bluestein provided an update regarding the ongoing Microsoft service outage, noting that the disruption had expanded globally and was affecting not only email services but also Microsoft authentication and Teams access. He explained that the outage was reportedly related to the deployment of new Microsoft security measures and that CHA had begun experiencing service disruptions earlier that day. Mr. Bluestein also responded to Board questions regarding the recording, storage, retention, and accessibility of Board meeting recordings following CHA's transition from Zoom to Microsoft Teams. He noted that recordings are currently stored within the Teams environment and can be downloaded and retained as necessary. Mr. Bluestein advised the Board that he would provide additional information during Executive Session regarding security devices, including backup systems and information security infrastructure, pursuant to S.C. Code § 30-4-70(a)(3).

Commissioner Ken Grimes made a motion to approve the Internal Reports as submitted, which was seconded by Commissioner Carol Jackson. With no additional discussion, the Chairman called for a vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Resolution #5227, Authorization to Amend the Morrison Station Master Development Agreement (MDA) with Integral Development, LLC

President & CEO Nathan Simms reviewed the proposed amendment, including the revised unit count, redevelopment funding requirements, financial participation and fee splits, and language preserving CHA's Right of First Offer under Section 4.20 of the MDA. The Board discussed the proposed language providing that the parties shall negotiate in a future amendment the purchase price and other buyout terms upon CHA's exercise of the Right of First Offer once additional financial information is available. A motion was made by Commissioner Jackson and seconded by Vice Chair Williams to approve Resolution #5227. The motion carried, with one dissenting vote by Chairman Greg Voigt.

Resolution #5229, Authorization of CEO to Execute Settlement Agreement Regarding 275 Huger Street

General Counsel Aris Hanchard Ferguson presented Resolution #5229, Authorization of CEO to Execute Settlement Agreement Regarding 275 Huger Street. Ms. Ferguson noted that the settlement agreement had previously been circulated and recirculated to the Board for review and explained that approval of the Resolution would authorize execution of the settlement agreement and payment of the associated settlement funds. A motion was made by Commissioner Grimes and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve Resolution #5229. The motion carried, with Commissioner Nick Schumacher voting in opposition.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution #5228, Approval of Tenant Accounts Receivable Write Off

Chief Housing & Real Estate Officer Debra Stephens presented Resolution #5209, requesting approval to write off Tenant Account Receivables totaling \$19,378.34, was introduced. Commissioner Schumacher moved to approve the resolution, and Vice Chair Williams seconded the motion. With no discussion, the Chair called for a vote, and the resolution was unanimously approved.

Resolution #5223, Approval for RFP Strategic Planning Services – Job No. 260602

Procurement & Contracts Manager Ms. Priscilla Waring reported that seven firms responded to the RFP for strategic planning services and that proposals and interviews were evaluated. TAG Associates, Inc. was identified as the most advantageous proposer. The Board confirmed that the procurement had been advertised in accordance with CHA procurement requirements and requested a copy of TAG Associates, Inc.'s proposal. A motion was made by Vice Chair Williams and seconded by Commissioner Nelson to approve Resolution #5223. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution #5231, Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Charleston Regarding a Potential Future Easement for Relocation of a Stormwater Drainage Pipe onto Housing Authority Property in Connection with the Lowline Project

General Counsel Ferguson explained that the MOU memorializes the parties' intent to enter into an easement in the future if the City's due diligence determines that the stormwater drainage pipe must be located on CHA property; the MOU itself is not the easement. She advised that the first sentence of Section 3 regarding each party bearing its own costs would be removed from the final MOU following discussion with City Corporation Counsel, because the stormwater project is a City undertaking. The Board also requested clarification regarding the correct TMS parcel reflected on the plat. A motion was made by Commissioner Jackson and seconded by Commissioner Schumacher to approve Resolution #5231 with the discussed revision. The motion passed unanimously.

CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION PERIOD

Mr. Redding O'Shea, a resident at Robert Mills Manor, asked whether current one-bedroom Robert Mills Manor residents would be able to relocate within Robert Mills Manor during renovation rather than being moved off-site. President & CEO Nathan Simms responded that the current plan is for relocations to occur on-site, section by section, unless circumstances require otherwise, and agreed to provide a written response.

Ms. Tracy Broughton, a resident at 670 King Street, raised questions regarding the nearby affordable housing development, application procedures, maintenance needs, HVAC issues, trash collection, meeting notifications, and transportation to Board meetings. General Counsel Ferguson advised that the nearby development was understood to be 100% affordable, that application information would need to be confirmed with the City, that meeting notices would be posted more visibly at properties, and that staff would follow up regarding trash collection.

Brenda McGuire Gradney, a resident of 670 King Street, raised concerns regarding dust and other impacts associated with nearby construction, as well as two incidents involving her vehicle being towed by CBR Towing. Staff clarified that the nearby construction is not a Housing Authority of the City of Charleston project or property, and that CBR Towing is not affiliated with, contracted by, or acting on behalf of CHA. Ms. Gradney also reported concerns regarding the conduct of a CBR Towing representative. Although neither the construction project nor CBR Towing is affiliated with CHA, staff advised that they would look into the matter and follow up regarding Ms. Gradney's

concerns. Staff further noted that it was agreed to reimburse Ms. Gradney for the towing expense, and they would advise that her vehicle had been towed on two separate occasions.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Jackson moved to enter Executive Session, and Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the Board entered Executive Session pursuant to S.C. Code § 30-4-70(a)(2) to discuss legal matters related to due diligence being conducted by Parker Poe, and pursuant to S.C. Code § 30-4-70(a)(3) to discuss security devices, including backup systems and information security infrastructure. Upon returning to open session, Chairman Voigt announced that no votes were taken and no decisions were made in Executive Session.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

After returning to public session, the Board discussed occasionally holding future Board meetings closer to CHA residents to increase accessibility, participation, and transparency. The Board also discussed moving the Citizen's Participation Period earlier in future agendas. General Counsel advised that Citizen's Participation is not listed in the bylaws as a required order-of-business item, allowing it to be moved earlier on the agenda. The Board discussed an initial three-minute public-comment period, subject to the Chair's discretion. The Board also discussed requirements for properly noticing specific reasons for Executive Session.

There being no further business, Commissioner Grimes moved to adjourn, seconded by both Commissioners Schumacher and Jackson simultaneously. The motion passed unanimously, and Chairman Voigt adjourned the Special Board Meeting of August 31, 2026, at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Simmons

Executive Assistant to the President & CEO