

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AND
HOUSING AUTHORITY**

June 28, 2010

The Board of Commissioners of the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (hereinafter “CRHA” or the “Housing Authority”) met in Regular Session at 7:04 PM on June 28, 2010 in Council Chambers at City Hall.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Jason Halbert called the meeting of the Board to order at 7:04 PM on June 28, 2010.

II. ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS

Present:

Ms. Sherri Clarke, Commissioner
Mr. Jason Halbert, Chair
Ms. Joy Johnson, Vice Chair
Mr. Richard Jones, Commissioner
Mr. Hosea Mitchell, Commissioner
Mr. Bob Stevens, Commissioner

Absent:

Ms. Holly Edwards, Commissioner

Staff Present:

Mr. Randy Bickers, Executive Director
Ms. Robin Munson, Finance Director
Ms. Rebecca Weybright, Housing Manager
Ms. Allyson Davies, Legal Counsel
Ms. Deetra West, Administrative Assistant

III. MOMENT OF SILENCE

Commissioner Halbert opened the meeting with a moment of silence.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD MAY 24, 2010.**

Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Commissioner Stevens. The minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

V. RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

There were no questions from the previous meeting.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Deirdre Gilmore 922-D South First Street, stated that for a couple of years she and other residents of the 922 building have experienced recurring problems with bats in and around their home. It’s becoming a nuisance and has frightened several residents in the

South First Street community. Several calls have been placed to the CRHA Maintenance Department and to the Charlottesville Fire Department to resolve this issue. She and her neighbors were temporarily displaced because of the bats. Intrastate was called out to plug up holes but it did not keep them from returning. Now she is having problems with flies in her home because of bat feces. CRHA offered Ms. Gilmore a temporary unit at Hardy Drive, but it was not big enough to accommodate her family. She appreciates staff's efforts of trying to help the problem but it's not enough and she would like a solution to the problem. She thanked Commissioner Johnson for listening to her problem and Commissioner Halbert for coming out to look at the situation when called. She also thanked Mr. Bickers for listening and actively doing more than previous Executive Directors.

Annette Wilcox, 1400 Monticello Road, stated a lot of trees and debris were seen all over the property where she lives and she was pleased to know that her maintenance department will begin cleanup shortly.

Shymora Cooper, 713-F 6th St., shared concerns of disrespect that some residents are feeling when talking with CRHA staff. She stated that some residents feel as though staff is inconsiderate and show no concern for residents. Some residents feel that their calls are not returned in a timely manner and that work orders are not being taken care of in a timely manner.

Overy Johnson, 500 South First Street # 814, stated the CRHA staff person assigned to Crescent Halls, Mr. Travis Houchens, is a very kind and considerate young man that respects the elderly and disabled. Mr. Johnson stated he thinks other staff members could learn from Mr. Houchens.

Debra Thomas-Pils, 500 South First Street # 706, stated she is very unhappy with the amount of money that residents are being charged to pay to have their walls painted. Ms. Pils stated residents should have their walls painted once every other year and not for the price of \$600 that the CRHA maintenance department charges. She would like to see residents treated with more respect.

Sylvia Taylor, 500 South First Street #810, stated she and other residents in her building are very upset that the computer lab at Crescent Halls is only open from 8:30am-8pm Mondays and Wednesdays. A snack machine is located in the computer lab that can not be accessed when the lab is closed. There are residents that work during the week and would like to be able to use the computers on the weekends. Residents were under the assumption that the lab would be open longer once cameras were put in place and they would like to see the lab open 5 days a week.

Paul Vaughn, PHAR, stated all the comments that are being made stem from the lack of respect that residents feel they are getting from CRHA staff. Regardless of the redevelopment process, residents still need to have their issues taken care of. He feels that if residents were treated with respect then calls would be returned quickly and maintenance problems would be fixed in a timely manner. He would like for the CRHA staff to be reminded that the agency exists because of the residents.

Latitia Owens, 932-D South First Street, stated she would like for the agency to look into having a grief and loss process put into place. Having a process would help a family cope with losing a loved one especially if that person was the head of household. She stated losing a head of household could displace a family which is extremely hard on the children that just lost a parent. The process could help the family figure out what the next step is.

Della Hancock, 500 South First Street # 812, stated she was housed back in October. She had a disagreement with her former boyfriend who is on the lease. Police granted her a restraining order but a judge ordered Ms. Hancock to vacate the premises. She asked the Board to overturn the order set forth by the judge and would like to have the former boyfriend removed from her lease.

Mr. Bickers addressed Ms. Gilmore's comment on the bats. CRHA recognized the situation as an emergency and asked for a quote for bat removal from a reputable company. The initial quote received was over \$20K and with the current procurement policy and the seriousness of the situation, the agency thought it would be wise to bid the work out. The agency currently has a solicitation out for quotes on the removal of bats. He stated staff thought that it was going to take a while to totally rectify the bat situation and offered Ms. Gilmore a transfer. Two other families were offered a transfer and one has accepted. He stated the offer still stands. The two bedroom transfer offer to Ms. Gilmore was a misunderstanding on Mr. Bickers' behalf as he thought that was the unit size she needed.

He stated the respect issue with staff, primarily the maintenance staff, has been an ongoing issue. Mr. Bickers stated that he has discussed professionalism with staff and that they still continue to struggle with it and it obviously needs to be addressed and he will address it again. He stated he was unaware of CRHA charging residents \$600 to paint walls adding that it is not common practice for staff to paint walls of a unit that is occupied. He stated he will look into the situation. Mr. Bickers stated there isn't a specific policy in place for grief and loss. He stated that the agency is dealing with a situation much like what Ms. Owens has talked about and CRHA has certainly not issued a 30 day notice nor given them any kind of deadline to move out. Staff is trying to work with them to see what their alternatives are and what staff can do to make the transition as easy as possible. He added CRHA is not at all interested in putting any family out of their unit with any kind of a timeline such as that, given the situation. Staff is working with the family and will figure out the best and respectful way to handle the situation.

VII. REPORTS

A. **Police Report – Sgt. Tom McKean**

Sgt. McKean was not present. Commissioner Halbert stated he sent an email to the Charlottesville Police Department requesting the crime statistics the Board has asked for over the past few years. The report would contain an analysis of crime activity in CRHA communities compared to the city as a whole. Commissioner Mitchell stated he would like to see a more consistent attendance at the CRHA Board of Commissioners meetings

from the police department. He added the lack of attendance speaks to the level of respect as referenced in the Public Comment Session. Commissioner Halbert said this has been an ongoing issue with the department. At times there is consistent participation and then it seems to decline for a period of time. He agreed to make a point to discuss this issue.

RECOGNITION OF COMMISSIONER RICHARD JONES

Commissioner Halbert thanked Commissioner Jones for serving 6 years (two consecutive terms) on the CRHA Board of Commissioners with a perfect attendance record. He stated Commissioner Jones' input has been incredible and his intelligence and knowledge of both property management and business has been invaluable to CRHA. Commissioner Mitchell agreed with Commissioner Halbert. He stated Commissioner Jones' voice of reason and practical, pragmatic approach will be surely missed and he hopes the Board will gain another member that possesses those skills. Commissioner Johnson stated that while she didn't agree with him on issues regarding redevelopment, she has learned a lot from Commissioner Jones specifically in the finance realm and she will miss that. She stated she has always followed his lead related to finances and learned what she needed to look out for when it was not spoken to her. She stated she would like to call him sometime to get help when looking through the budget and thanked him for his service. She added she would like to have Commissioner Jones still be a part of the Finance Committee. Commissioner Stevens stated he agreed with all the comments of the other commissioners. He stated he'll miss Commissioner Jones' understanding of the budget and the ability to look through the numbers and point out troubled areas where too much money is being spent. Commissioner Stevens stated he hopes the Board will gain someone with his knowledge of property management and business and he strongly urges City Council to appoint someone with that type of background. Mr. Bickers reiterated what he said at the Finance Committee meeting - that he thanked Commissioner Jones for pushing and demanding more from the agency, sometimes more than the agency demanded of itself. Commissioner Clarke thanked Commissioner Jones for the opportunity to have sat on the Board with him. She stated he is the "numbers man" and he held the agency accountable. She thanked him and wished him good luck. Commissioner Jones stated it was an honor and a privilege to serve the residents and all of the people in Charlottesville. He stated it is important to take care of the day to day living of residents and that has been his "bread and butter". He said he was bought on the Board six years ago with the instruction to build a model project at Levy Avenue. While it did not happen, he worked with a lot of great commissioners and staff and he enjoyed every bit of it.

B. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Bickers reported as of the end of May, CRHA has 16 vacant units. He reported a fire damaged unit that has been offline for some time is near completion and should be back on line by the end of July.

1. Resolution #1277 Adopting a Reasonable Accommodations Policy

Mr. Bickers presented a draft of the Reasonable Accommodation Policy to the board at the April 26th meeting. Based on Board comments, the word “licensed” was inserted before clinic in part “d” of the Verification of Disability section on page 6. The draft policy was posted for public comment and no comments were received during the posted period. The draft policy was also presented to the Resident Services Committee. The policy is required as part of CRHA’s Voluntary Compliance Agreement with HUD related to Section 504. HUD has reviewed and approved this policy along with Ms. Manson-Davies and Legal Aid. Commissioner Jones felt the policy was worded very loosely and open to interpretation; however, Commissioner Johnson stated the policy could be amended through the Annual Plan. Commissioner Mitchell made a motion to approve Resolution #1277 Adopting the Reasonable Accommodation Policy, seconded by Commissioner Stevens.

AYES

NAYES

ABSTAIN

Commissioner Clarke
Commissioner Halbert
Commissioner Jones
Commissioner Johnson
Commissioner Mitchell
Commissioner Stevens

Resolution #1277 passes.

2. Resolution #1278 Employees Contributions to VRS

Mr. Bickers stated the Virginia Retirement Systems (VRS) is the retirement policy for employees of CRHA. CRHA has the option of passing two resolutions related to the Virginia Retirement System and its related benefits. The first resolution concerns the portion of the 5% member contribution that employers choose to pay. The Virginia Assembly passed legislation implementing new plan provisions for employees hired on or after July 1, 2010. This new plan is called VRS Plan 2. This new plan stipulates that State Plan 2 employees must pay the 5% member contribution as a pre-tax salary reduction. The legislation gives political subdivisions (CRHA) the option of continuing to pay all or part of the 5% contribution by passing a resolution. CRHA has always covered the full 5% member contribution for all employees and will also have to continue to pay the 5% for all employees hired before July 1st.

The second VRS resolution covers offering the “Transitional Benefits Program” to provide transitional severance benefits or an enhanced retirement benefit to employees that are laid off or of retirement age. This would force CRHA to pay a certain amount of severance to employees that were laid off. For the great majority of CRHA employees, who are under the age of 50, this program would mandate severance benefits that would otherwise be negotiable for employees. All of these costs would be entirely at CRHA’s expense. The Finance Committee recommended approval of the first resolution option, Resolution #1278 Employees Contributions to VRS.

AYES

NAYES

ABSTAIN

Commissioner Clarke

CRHA
BOC Regular Meeting
June 28, 2010

Commissioner Halbert
Commissioner Jones
Commissioner Johnson
Commissioner Mitchell
Commissioner Stevens

Resolution #1278 passes.

Mr. Bickers stated CRHA has received its SEMAP (Section 8 Management Assessment Program) score for the year ending 3/31/10. For the second consecutive year, CRHA has been rated a “high performer” receiving an overall score of 96%. This is a great accomplishment as the CRHA’s Section 8 Program which was considered a troubled program a few years ago.

Mr. Bickers stated CRHA has received a quote for the purchase of pollution liability insurance related to the purchase of the Avon Street property. The quote, which at this point is not based on a fully completed application, is \$49,808 for \$2,000,000 in coverage and \$73,066 for \$5,000,000 in coverage and would cover a period of five years. The policy would not cover remediation costs associated with “known” conditions which are the findings from the most recent Phase I study. The policy would cover remediation costs associated with any unknown conditions as well as bodily injury and property damage claims related to any and all environmental conditions including known conditions. The policies would have a \$25,000 deductible per pollution occurrence. After checking with the Insurance Agency, Mr. Bickers stated CRHA does not have to have the policy in place before closing on the property however the agency would want to have a policy in place before proceeding with building on the property if it chooses to purchase this coverage. Mr. Bickers stated the quote does not require action at this time but is rather being presented for discussion. The Board decided to send the policy back to Finance Committee for further discussion.

Mr. Bickers stated CRHA has received official notification of the 2010 Capital Fund Allocation which is \$628,131. Staff had estimated an award of \$629,334 within our latest annual plan and had established a budget based on that amount. CRHA’s Capital Projects’ Manager and Finance Director are currently working on a revised budget with the exact amount received and any changes in budgeted projects based on current priorities and completed projects. No action is required by the Board as the Board approved the estimated 2010 Capital fund and budget as part of the annual plan. The revised budget and signed ACC Amendments are due to HUD by July 12, 2010. Commissioner Johnson asked if the removal of bats could be considered a capital item because of the price and could it be moved to the top of the list. Mr. Bickers stated he would have to talk with HUD to see if bat removal and clean up is considered an item. If it’s considered a capital item then it would move to the top of the list because it would be considered an emergency.

C. Committee Reports

1. Finance Report

Commissioner Stevens stated the committee received a presentation from Mr. Dan Rosensweig, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity. The organization is seeking 9 vouchers to project base in order to redevelop two trailer parks, one in Albemarle County and one in the City. CRHA doesn't have the funding at the present time to use these vouchers and could be put in the position of having to fund them for outside use. Currently CRHA has agreed to give some vouchers to an SRO in which the City has agreed to fund those vouchers. At this time, CRHA is not interested in project basing any more vouchers. Mr. Bickers stated he discussed the option of coming up with creative ways to work together with Habitat for Humanity in hopes to partner with them down the road in the redevelopment process. The committee discussed the financial reports and Commissioner Jones pointed out some budget items he felt were too high. The committee discussed the turnover process and recognized the vacant number of units has gone down to 16 from the 19-21 range. Commissioner Stevens stated he and Commissioner Johnson have started an Ad Hoc committee to look at CRHA eligibility policies to find efficient ways to speed up the process and make it easier for staff and to make the process easier for residents. Commissioner Stevens stated the meetings are open to any and everyone and he encouraged residents to come to the meetings.

Commissioner Halbert inquired about the significantly higher Receivable report this month. Mr. Bickers stated the spike was due to high balances because of unreported income. Repayment agreements are in place and should bring those numbers down quite a bit. While it takes some time to collect the money back, residents are very responsive to agreements. Commissioner Jones stated it would be a good idea to put this item on the agenda for discussion.

2. Resident Services

Commissioner Johnson reported the committee met on June 10th. CRHA Finance Director, Ms. Robin Munson, was present at the meeting to address issues concerning rent statements and utility allowances. She was able to make improvements to rent statements so that they are more user friendly. Residents were able to express their concerns with disrespect from staff; not just the maintenance staff but other staff as well. CRHA Property Managers were in attendance and members of the committee were able to get an understanding concerning the proper contact person for certain circumstances. The committee discussed creating a Customer Satisfaction Survey for CRHA. Residents expressed their frustrations with the answering service process and they were able to get some clarity on what is considered a maintenance emergency. Mr. Bickers stated staff is looking into possibly changing some of the items that are listed as emergencies for the maintenance on call person. Staff is also looking into having a property manager on call number to give to the answering service to provide additional guidance for residents after hours.

Commissioner Clarke stated she would like to see a policy put into place for power outages and a procedure to follow especially for those with special needs. She said she called the answering service the night of the terrible storm that came through Charlottesville and was told to call the Maintenance Department to report power outages. Mr. Bickers stated that CRHA received a lot of calls from residents regarding the power outages. Staff was updating Dominion Power of outages as the calls came in. He feels

that Dominion's response to the outages was good given the nature of the storm and damage they were facing around Charlottesville and surrounding counties. Commissioner Clarke stated she was concerned for the residents with special needs at all public housing sites not just Crescent Halls and asked Mr. Bickers if he opposed residents owning personal generators. Mr. Bickers stated generators would need to be hooked up properly and he would like to explore that possibility a little more just to insure the safety of residents was not compromised. He encouraged residents to notify their property managers of any special needs they may have.

Mr. Bickers stated public housing sites were in fair condition after the storm. There were a significant amount of trees that fell around the sites. Crescent Halls had a tree down in the parking lot, a tree fell down on the Community Center at Westhaven, and one tree fell thru a backyard at Riverside. Michie Drive experienced the worst of fallen trees. Two fell down on a building and required specialized equipment cranes to remove them to prevent more damage to the building. Several other trees fell in the backyard and side yards on Michie Drive. Property managers, maintenance staff, and Mr. Bickers spent all day in the Westhaven community picking up debris that was scattered all over the site. He commended staff for a job well done in cleaning up sites and staying on sites well into the night to make sure power was restored after the storm. He gave a big thank you to Commissioner Johnson for providing maintenance workers with food and water while working on site.

Commissioner Halbert stated CRHA staff, commissioners, and various local health agencies are currently working on an emergency evacuation plan for Crescent Halls and this latest storm is a reminder that the plan needs to be finalized and implemented. He would also like to have a system wide plan in place of how to notify and direct all residents to designated City disaster centers in the case of emergency situations.

3. Redevelopment Committee

Commissioner Mitchell stated the committee had a good discussion. The committee was able to agree on a resolution to bring to the full Board. The resolution identifies the next steps of the process which is to develop on Levy and the rehabilitation of Crescent Halls. The resolution fully embraces resident respect and the endorsement of The Residents' Bill of Rights and puts a cap on what density should look like.

Commissioner Mitchell stated the committee discussed support services and how to integrate it successfully. Ms. Holly Hatcher led a discussion on how to improve coordination between existing providers. Because of the lack of staff, the City along with non-profits and other community agencies will have to get involved to make this a successful process. This will be an ongoing agenda item for upcoming Redevelopment Committee meetings. He added the committee will have three subcommittees each with its own chairman to focus on Levy Avenue, Support Services, and Grants/Finance.

Mr. Bickers stated Tuesday, July 13th from 6 -7:30pm there will be an Open House Related to Neighborhood Revitalization at the Carver Rec Center on 4th Street. This meeting will be the last opportunity to view the redevelopment options and to receive feedback for each option. The illustrations will show the different levels of density and

will provide a chance to share with the community what the agency is trying to do. CRHA is hoping many people will come and share their thoughts. Child care and some snacks will be provided at this meeting. Monday, August 9th thru Tuesday, August 10th will be the second Greenville, SC trip. This trip will include the Mayor, Vice Mayor, a few members of PHAR, some CRHA Commissioners, and Mr. Bickers. These dates will allow for a further discussion at the next day's Redevelopment Committee meeting.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

IX. COMMITTEE MEETING DATE CHECK-IN

Redevelopment Committee Meeting – meets 2nd Wednesday of the month
Next meeting will be July 14, 2010 at 10:00am in the South First Street Community Center.

Resident Services Committee Meeting- meets 2nd Thursday of the month
Next meeting will be July 8, 2010 at 12:00pm in the Crescent Hall Community Room.

Finance Committee Meeting – meets 3rd Wednesday of the month
Next meeting will be July 24, 2010 at 4pm, in City Hall Basement Conference Room

Finance Ad Hoc Subcommittee will meet on Thursday, July 8, 2010 at 4:30pm in the CRHA Central Office Conference Room

Regular Board Meeting – meets 4th Monday of the month
Next meeting July 26, 2010 at 7pm, Council Chambers

13th Annual Westhaven Community Day will be Saturday, August 7, 2010 from 10:00am-9:00pm at Westhaven.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Paul Vaughn, PHAR, clarified that PHAR has not officially commented on Redevelopment Options 5 and 6 but are real close to finishing up on the education and surveys pieces. Once that is finished they will notify the Redevelopment Committee.

Deirdre Gilmore, 922-D South First Street, thanked Mr. Bickers for everything he does. She stated she has never seen an Executive Director come out and pick up trash on the sites before REAC Inspections and to be so thorough. She pointed out to Staff that residents are not enemies of the employees of CRHA and would like to have a workshop to bridge that gap. She noted that a light has been out behind the 910 building that has been out for 3 weeks now. She wants to see the relationship change between the residents and staff because residents shouldn't feel that they don't want particular maintenance workers in their homes. She wants everyone to work together and for residents to be greeted kindly and respectfully. She stated the agency needs a change because what is going on now is not working for anyone.

CRHA
BOC Regular Meeting
June 28, 2010

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm