

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

September 29, 2014

The Board of Commissioners of the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority, (hereinafter "CRHA" or the "Housing Authority") held the Annual Meeting at 7:00 PM on September 29, 2014, in City Council Chambers at City Hall.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Woodard called the meeting of the Board to order at 7:10 PM on September 29, 2014.

**II. ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Present:**

Mr. Keith O. Woodard, Chair  
Ms. LaTita Talbert, Vice-Chair  
Ms. Julie Jones, Treasurer  
Ms. Lauren Curley, Commissioner  
Ms. Audrey Oliver, Commissioner  
Ms. Sabrina Allen, Commissioner  
Mayor Satyendra Huja, Commissioner

**Absent:**

**Staff Present:**

Ms. Constance Dunn, Executive Director  
Ms. Robin Munson, Finance Director  
Ms. Allyson Manson-Davies, Deputy City Attorney  
Ms. Amy Nofziger, Executive Administrator  
Ms. Heather Jeffries, Asset Manager

**III. MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Commissioner Woodard called for a moment of silence.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD July 28, 2014**

Mayor Huja moved to amend the Minutes. Commissioner Oliver seconded. Commissioner Oliver said there needs to be a correction to the Public Comment section recognizing the speaker as Dr. Rev. Alvin Edwards instead of Alvin Edwards.

**AYES:**

Commissioner Woodard  
Commissioner Allen  
Commissioner Oliver  
Commissioner Jones  
Commissioner Talbert

**NAYS:**

**ABSTAINED:**

Mayor Huja  
Commissioner Curley

All Commissioners voted in favor of approving the Minutes as amended.

V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD August 25, 2014**

Commissioner Allen moved to approve the Minutes. Commissioner Curley seconded.

**AYES:**

Commissioner Woodard  
Commissioner Allen  
Commissioner Oliver  
Commissioner Jones  
Commissioner Talbert  
Mayor Huja  
Commissioner Curley

**NAYS:**

**ABSTAINED:**

All Commissioners voted in favor of approving the Minutes with no Abstentions.

VI. **RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

Ms. Dunn: This report will include responses to questions from the public and Board Action Items that are pending from previous meetings.

There was an inquiry regarding how child support calculated. If a household member receives child support- it counts as income. The income is annualized and the Housing Authority uses the amount of child support that is received, not necessarily what is ordered by the court. The Housing Authority uses the Virginia Department of Social Services website to determine the amount of the child support payment for the custodial parent. If a resident certifies that they receive an amount that is not showing in the verification system, CRHA asks for a notarized letter from the person making the child support payments. If this documentation is not available- then the resident is asked to make a written statement and have it notarized.

Some residents will bring the entire statement from Child Support Enforcement which makes it really easy to see what payments have been received and what is supposed to be paid. If someone disputes their child support, we ask them to get this statement from the Enforcement Center and these statements are usually comprehensive for the entire time child support has been ordered by the court.

At the last meeting there was a lot of discussion regarding Playground Equipment. After investigation CRHA has been able to determine that Playground equipment additions are covered by the Capital Fund and CRHA will be working with residents to select additional pieces for the parks. We must work within the code restrictions regarding the

use of the space and further evaluation and resident input will solicited before any additions are made.

At the Finance meeting last Wednesday, Commissioners requested a summary of FSS participants and total escrow amounts. This will be provided at the next Regular Meeting.

Commissioners requested a count of zero income participants in the HCV program. There are 20 families that claimed zero income. After completion of the required Zero Income Checklist only 8 of those families were actually zero income.

CRHA distributed our monthly Board Packet a full week in advance of the meeting via email this month to give Commissioners plenty of time to review this.

There have been inquiries regarding enforcement of the Barment Policy, specifically when the policy will be enforced again. We communicated with the Police Department last week and they indicated that there are still a number of names that are under research and they are working diligently to review these individual files.

## **VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Housing Authority has hired a new Resident Apprentice and CRHA is very happy to have this position filled. Our new employee has started a Carpentry class at CATEC along with one of our Maintenance Tech I employees and we see this as a great opportunity to develop their skill levels to the point where they may be qualified for Maintenance Tech II in Training at some point in the future.

### **Eviction Prevention**

This evening's agenda includes Public Comment regarding our Eviction Policy. In December of 2012 the CRHA Board assigned a subcommittee of two Board members to review the policy. Both Board members had extensive housing management experience and their determination was that the policy was sound and no revisions were needed.

CRHA agreed to meet with PHAR and Legal Aid to review the Policy in early 2014 and CRHA agreed to formalize the practices that were instrumental in reducing the number of evictions as part of the policy. The policy submitted to you from the Housing Authority is a result of discussions at that meeting. Changes to the policy are in red for your reference and include: the Housing Authority will not file for collection on balances that are lower than \$50, documentation of the meetings regarding residents pasty balance will be recorded, and showed the residence, the number of resources that are available without paying the rent.

Paying rent is a basic resident responsibility under the lease agreement. Each new resident receives a two hour lease briefing that emphasizes the need to pay rent in time in full. CRHA maintains a list of resources that are made available to residents who are interested in receiving help with paying their rent and provide this list to those families behind on their rent. Asset Managers are tasked with responsibility to collect the rent and their job description specifically states: Responsible for collection of delinquent rents,

contacting residents, documenting all meetings, connecting residents to services when appropriate.

Clearly CRHA's Eviction Policy is effective. Eviction has been a high level topic for CRHA since I began as Director in 2012 so I'd like to take a moment to review the statistics, to once again provide the public with a historical perspective: Prior to 2010 - CRHA had at least 15 or more evictions per year, there were 23 evictions in 2011, 10 evictions in 2012, 6 evictions in 2013 and there have been no Evictions to date in 2014. CRHA's current Eviction Policy provides extensive amounts of time for residents to pull together their finances before the collection process even begins. Residents have 25-30 days from when the rent is due before any legal proceedings begin. The Asset Manager has always been responsible for making sure the resident is contacted regarding the delinquent rent and this is documented to the file. Virginia Law requires an additional 21 days before the initial court hearing. If the Resident contests the amount owed the case is set for trial and this can be an additional 14-21 days. At this point in the process, the resident has been given approximately 74 days to find ways to bring the account current. If at trial the judge enters judgment and possession, our policy still allows the resident to avoid Eviction. The Executive Director then requests a meeting with the Resident to make sure that there is a clear understanding that the Resident is about to lose their housing. When there are no other lease violations with the household, the Executive Director may still chose to work with the family to help them keep their housing. Compared to conventional practice of approximately 45 days from rent due to the potential eviction date, CRHA provides 90 days, or double the amount of days to work with the family to collect the rent.

As part of our Annual Contributions Contract HUD expects the Housing Authority to enforce the lease and collect rent. In our recent HUD Training there was no reference to Eviction Prevention because this is not the responsibility of the Housing Authority. The HUD Training package states that the Board of Commissioners is responsible for ensuring that the Housing Authority enforces the lease and collects rent. CRHA was advised by the HUD Department of Enforcement in December of 2013 that Eviction Prevention was not an approved front line staffing expense for Public Housing. In fact our scores with HUD are negatively impacted when the Housing Authority does not replace a delinquent tenant with a tenant from our waitlist that is a paying tenant. Failure to collect rent ties directly into our scores under HUD'S Public Housing Assessment System or PHAS. CRHA was advised in June of 2014 by HUD Director Catherine Lamberg that the Housing Authority was walking on a "slippery slope" towards troubled status due to our poor rent collections and financial status. Adding additional time or more lenient provisions to the current Eviction Policy will only increase the risk that our scores will drop below "standard performer" into "troubled status" with HUD. We were again advised of this on the recent visit from our new Financial Analyst on the day of our Financial Oversight Training Session privately when speaking to the HUD staff.

The responsibility of the Executive Director is to advise the Board on how to maintain and improve Financial Viability and my recommendation is that the current policy is working very well without any additional changes.

In the Director's Report Section of your binder is the 3/31/14 PHAS score which shows that CRHA's uncollected rent or Accounts Receivable measurements is just slightly above troubled at a score of 16 out of 25. I have also included a summary of our end of Fiscal Year Accounts Receivable figures for 2013 and 2014. This is the snapshot that HUD uses for the scoring. Fiscal year end 2014 was remarkably better than 2013 by a total of \$8,496. This is another indicator that our Policy is working well as it is written with the minor modifications that have been recommended.

In the Director's Report Tab there is also an individual Amp comparison between FY ending 2014 and budgeted end of year 2015 so that Commissioners can see individual Amp performance. Clearly Crescent Hall is our greatest financial challenge.

Commissioner Woodard stated that Eviction Prevention might not be a funded responsibility of the Housing Authority but it is in everyone's best interest to avoid evictions.

Commissioner Jones mentioned that we used to have a prevention coordinator and the position is now gone because it's not required by HUD. Those jobs responsibilities have been transferred to Asset Managers. She also asked how the Asset Managers handle this task.

Executive Director stated that the Asset Manager's role with the Housing Authority has not changed and that during every single eviction prevention meeting with the resident the Asset Manager was always present, and when that was viewed by HUD they said that that was a duplication of staffing and CRHA is not positioned to have multiple people performing a single function.

Commissioner Jones asked if other Housing Authorities have similar positions or policies regarding eviction prevention. Ms. Dunn responded that in reaching out to other agencies it appears that collection of rent is handled conventionally with most of the responsibility placed on the resident. She stated that CRHA is doing exactly what has always been done to prevent eviction with the Asset Manager making contact with the resident, documenting that contact and reporting to the Executive Director their efforts to make sure the resident understand the balance owed and the process that will occur.

Commissioner Oliver stated that in the eviction policy we still had areas where the prevention coordinator still had to do certain things, does this mean now that the Asset Manager have to do these things.

Executive Director stated yes, and they have been all along.

Commissioner Curley stated that the Executive Director did an excellent job with her responses to items from previous meetings. She stated that after reading the PHAR response it seems that the Housing Authority should have a written guideline so that residents understand who is eligible for a repayment policy and to formalize that showing consistency and transparency.

Executive Director Dunn stated that CRHA's practice regarding repayment policy is consistently applied but not in writing and a draft will be available at the next meeting.

### **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Brandon Collins, 418 Fairway Ave., PHAR employee, stated that everyone is grateful that there have not been any evictions. The eviction policy is proving to be helpful. We all can agree that collecting rent is up to the Housing Authority not HUD. He also provided some papers with eviction policies that he would like to discuss with the board individually to consider. He also distributed a document with PHAR comments regarding the City Manager's recommendations to Council for CRHA Board consideration.

Connie Rosenbaum, 802 Hardy Dr., stated that if we'll have a prevention coordinator who will do the job. She also wanted to know why then have a block party this year for the kids. She also stated that she was disappointed that they didn't paint the doors. She also asked if she was in the hospital would still be held accountable for the rent?

Aaliyah Jones, 802 Hardy Dr., reported that if you're sick and not able to pay your rent what can you do? She also stated that if you violated your lease, but that matter has been cleared up, does that help? She also stated that the staff has a bad attitude when the residents call.

Joy Johnson, 802 Hardy Dr., stated that she is glad that everybody's working together on eviction prevention. She stated that the eviction prevention person was paid for by a grant and they were there to help deal with the family and their issues, so the Asset Manager could do manager things. She also stated that the Housing Authority should apply for a grant to have an eviction prevention staff member if possible.

Kim Rolla, LAJC, stated that some very positive things are happening within the Housing Authority and that from 2013 to 2014 rent collections actually improved with no eviction. She stated that when residents are on a repayment plan it helps the bottom line and is a win win for all parties. She would like the policy to reflect that when a resident pays in full, rent should be accepted without reservation and that the current policy reads more severe than CRHA's current practices regarding rent collection. She would like to see more specific language in 21/30 day notices so that residents are clear regarding what is required of them, citing the example of an illegal resident where the CRHA wants them removed from the household, how does the resident demonstrate this to CRHA?

Deidre Gilmore, 613 Hinton Ave., stated that she is very pleased with the hiring of Shymora Cooper. She also stated that the customer service in the offices should be

improved. She stated that her most recent experience was at the HCV Office (Rental Office) and she was upset by how she was treated by staff there. She thanked Ms. Dunn for offering to speak with her that day about her concerns but stated she didn't feel like re-entering the office to talk.

Commissioner Woodard stated that this is an opportunity for Public Comment regarding the Eviction Policy and asked if anyone else would like to speak. He then closed Public Comments and asked Commissioners if they have questions regarding the comments.

Mayor Huja asked the Executive Director to talk to the staff about the customer service issues, stating that he realizes that staff must also enforce the lease and rules.

Executive Director Dunn stated customer service has been an emphasis since she began and as a result all of the incoming phone calls are recorded and if there is a concern about customer service she can access the call and listen to staff. She stated that in every case reported when she offers to do this the complaining resident then retracts their complaint. She stated that she must deal in fact in order to be fair to both residents and to staff and that often the job of staff is to inform a resident that they have violated their lease agreement and this task is not easy for staff or for the resident to hear.

She explained that annually HUD requires the Housing Authority to recertify each resident's income and information and that this process begins 120 days prior to the due date. At 90 days the Resident is supposed to come for their appointment with all of their documents and sign the required HUD certifications. Often residents are unwilling to comply with this requirement which is closely monitored by HUD. If the annual certification is incomplete as of the anniversary date then the Housing Authority is in serious violation with HUD. Extensive effort goes into helping residents complete this process and most of this involves customer service skills on the part of staff.

Commissioner Curley asked if the employees go through customer service training.

Executive Director stated that yes they do you have training on a regular basis once a month with some trainings sponsored through the City of Charlottesville. She stated that she will come prepared with a list of training resources at the next meeting.

Commissioner Curley asked that CRHA take advantage of Association memberships offered through organizations like the NAA or the local Apartment Association making customer service readily available to staff.

Mayor Huja also asked why CRHA didn't have a block party.

Executive Director Dunn responded that in the past the community of Westhaven in combination with PHAR and some very active residents have put on their own block party. The Housing Authority was not the sponsor of that block party, The Housing Authority facilitated past block parties by helping with setup and cleanup. This year the

usual organizers were not willing to carry out the event and the Housing Authority does not have funding or resources to do this for all of our communities.

Mayor Huja commented that maybe PHAR can take on the responsibility for the event.

Executive Director Dunn also stated that the Housing Authority has a work plan for exterior improvement and has to prioritize but will certainly take the door painting into consideration. She also stated that the role of the Asset Manager is to enforce the lease and there is never been a time to her knowledge when someone has been hospitalized and evicted. The Housing Authority takes into consideration the individual circumstances of the resident.

Commissioner Talbert commented that the eviction policies should be something placed in writing for the residents. She would like to see an easy bullet point format to save time and make sure residents clearly understand how to remedy a lease violation.

Ms. Dunn explained that if a lease violation occurs that is not a serious threat to persons or property then the resident can remedy the violation without repercussions later. If the issue is of a serious nature then eviction can occur then or later if repeated violations occur. She stated that the Housing Authority has an obligation not just to each individual but to the community.

Commissioner Curley commented that she appreciated Joy Johnson's positive comments and perspective on the Eviction Prevention position. She stated that CRHA should use this as an opportunity to build relationships between staff and residents.

Commissioner Talbert asked if there was a customer service etiquette class. She also asked if they comment card drop box to be placed in the offices.

Commissioner Curley said that they may want to look at customer service training as part of the Personnel Committee.

#### **IX. BOARD DISCUSSION REGARDING NEXT STEPS IN REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING**

Commissioner Woodard opened the discussion regarding City Manager's recommendations and asked for comments from the Board.

Executive Director Dunn stated that Commissioners binder includes the City Manager's recommendations.

Mayor Huja stated that city Council hasn't discussed this yet so this hasn't yet been approved.

Commissioner Jones pointed out that CRHA should have a discussion prior meeting with City Council to prioritize the needs and that CRHA might benefit more from having a

consultant than hiring a staff person since staff people were hired in the past with little results.

Commissioner Jones commented that so much of the discussion regarding eviction prevention ties to support services for self-sufficiency and that the idea of Department of Social Services hiring an FSS coordinator might bring more resources to the table. Commissioner Woodard agreed. Commissioner Curley requested that CRHA obtain feedback from PHAR and Commissioner Woodard indicated that they have provided feedback in earlier public comment.

Executive Director Dunn stated that City Council and the CRHA Board are scheduling a joint work session, probably in November. Mayor Huja stated that is important for all Board members to attend. Ms. Dunn stated one of the Housing Authority's immediate needs is a Modernization Coordinator, and City Council needs to approve this. As a preliminary step a have reviewed other Housing Authority's annual plans into a great degree, and will come to the first meeting with a pick list.

Commissioner Talbert inquired if the Modernization Coordinator position has been posted and Ms. Dunn responded that it has not yet been approved. Ms. Davies reminded the Board that any hiring of consultants must follow HUD procurement rules even if the funds used are from another source.

Ms. Dunn referenced the Commissioner binders which include an email from Greg Byrne, Senior Project Manager with the D.C. HUD office in which he clarifies that at this point in time filing a RAD application means you lock in with the 2014 operating subsidies levels which are 98%. She stressed the importance of submitting an application soon.

Commissioner Jones asked to have a dollar amount tied to this percentage at the next meeting.

Ms. Dunn gave an overview of the Annual Plan process and suggested that future redevelopment discussions occur after the joint meeting with City Council. Commissioner Jones stated that the process should start as early as possible and Ms. Dunn stated that she is in the process of reviewing plans from other Housing Authorities.

Commissioner Woodard again reminded the Board to provide Ms. Dunn with their avoid dates for the next two months to facilitate scheduling of meetings.

Ms. Dunn gave a quick budget review. CRHA originally budgeted a loss of \$367,000 in the Public Housing, Section 8 Admin and Central office funds. A commitment was made to cut \$150,000 in staffing and cuts were made to equal \$212,000 annually. Also insurance costs and dumpster costs were cut a total of \$55,000 annually. Full benefit of these cuts will be seen in the next fiscal year and more cuts are being considered.

**X. Resolution #1322 Recognition of Utility Study for years June 1, 2013-June 1, 2018**

Analysis required annually by HUD: As part of the Housing Authority's obligation to annually review utility allowances, the Board is revisiting a Resolution that was passed in 2013. On an annual basis the Housing Authority is required to examine the household's consumption of the utilities and the rates charged by the service providers. We adopted the 2010 study in 2012 and we are locked into it for five years so no additional Resolution is needed until 2017.

Robin Munson stated that when the review is done there are three areas you need to examine. First is consideration of significant changes such as improvements to make homes more energy efficient, or has the age of the structures served to make them less energy efficient. A second consideration is that there must be a study done at least every five years. The third part of the analysis is to examine changes in utility rates. CRHA has done the analysis but there can be no allowance change until the five-year period is over per the Utility Agreement however Ms. Munson did point out that if a rate change shifted more than 10% then an allowance change should be considered. Electricity rates are over 10% higher but CRHA is locked into the current agreement and cannot make any changes to offset these higher costs.

**XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Resident Services**

Joy Johnson reported that Mr. Ellis the Assistant City Manager and Mike Murphy attended the Resident Services meeting. Mr. Ellis talked a little bit about what is being proposed to city Council, and he talked about the police. He also talked about the barment. Mike Murphy talked about Social Services desire to set up a self-sufficiency program. The next meeting is going to be at Westhaven October 9th at 1 PM.

**B. Finance Committee**

Ms. Munson reported that the fifth month of the fiscal year for public housing there was a net loss \$9807. The income is \$51,000 lower than expected at this point in time but the expenses are even more low by \$78,000.

As for Section 8, the HAP portion of the budget was a net loss of \$280,758. We are very close to budget on the income. HAP payments paid out to the landlords under by \$30,000 from what we budgeted at the five-month point. This is due to participants voluntarily ending participation or porting out of our program. The Net Restricted Asset balance at August 31 was \$292,000. The HUD held balance at August 31 was \$244,000.

The Admin portion of the section 8 program is also doing fine at this point for a net gain of \$14,972 this is basically because at one point in June HUD sent Admin Fees as if CRHA had fully leased all allocated vouchers. They will probably not ask for the money back and but likely will decrease this funding in the future. We didn't need to transfer any funds because we have had no losses. We have budgeted a loss of \$89,000 to be coming from our unrestricted assets, at five months but actuals are \$22,000 ahead of budget.

Central office has a net gain of \$2765. We had nine vacant units which is 2.93% vacancy rate, slightly up from eight last month. The active tenet accounts receivable is \$11,433 and 43 residents owe more than \$50 each. Court results for August 19 meant eight households were heard and judgment was granted on two of them, two were continued till September 23 and four were subsequently dismissed paid in full, one was set for trial on September 2 and results for that case twas judgment and possession.

## **XII. OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Curley commended the Housing Authority for the Facebook page and recommended that residents “like” the page. She also stated that on the personnel committee they are working on the language to add to the Bylaws and it should be available at the next meeting.

Commissioner Woodard stated that HUD and the Commissioners should be thanked for their participation in the HUD training and that this training should occur more frequently if possible.

## **XIII. COMMITTEE CHECK IN**

The community center meeting is on October 7th at 4:30 PM in the City Hall basement conference room.

The Resident Services meeting is October 9th at 1 PM in the Westhaven community center.

The Finance Committee meeting is Wednesday, October 22th at 4:30 PM in the City Hall basement conference room.

The Board of Commissioners meeting is Monday, October 27 at 7 PM in the City Council chambers.

## **XIV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Annette Wilcox, 1400 Monticello Rd., commented that she was sad to see Seth the head property manager at her community leave and she hopes her landlord will find someone qualified.

Joy Johnson, 802 Hardy Dr., mentioned that in addition to the resident services meeting report already referenced Residents also talked with Mr. Ellis about community policing and maybe they can speak to the Executive Director about it. She also stressed again about the relocation plan as a requirement under HUD Regulations. She stated that the board needs to have a plan for the residents. She also stated that she asked the City of Promise to take care of the block party but they never followed through. She mentioned that the roof of the community center needs to be replaced, and this should be put in the annual plan. Also the family self-sufficiency program only includes a few people and it doesn't cover the whole community. She stated that when she works in the clinic she leaves her attitude at the door and the staff in the answering service should do the same.

Brandon Collins, 418 Fairway Ave., and PHAR employee stated that there are a lot of consequences when it comes to eviction prevention. The informal notices before the 21/30 is issued are an attempt to resolve the dispute without having to take someone to court, which in turn impacts the residents on their effort to become self-sufficient. It affects their credit and ability to find housing if you have a 21/30 on your record. He stated it would be important to minimize these on their records. He mentioned the city review and how you should take it seriously. He stated that the City Manager came back with small ideas and the reason is because the City Council doesn't want to give out money. He also commented on the relocation of the residence for redevelopment.

Deidre Gilmore, 613 Hinton Ave., mentioned that the staff was upset with her because she wanted to read what they wanted her to sign. She questioned whether the forms required were actually HUD forms that were required.

Mayor Huja commented that we need to start a relocation plan now.

Executive Director stated that she is happy to create scenarios for the different sections as a starting point.

Commissioner Talbert commented on self-sufficiency that it's only a certain number of people and we should bring the whole community into self-sufficiency. She would also like to add the personnel committee to the agenda.

**XV. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Woodard adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.