

Burlington Housing Authority
Minutes from the Regular Board of Commissioner Meeting
December 17, 2024

Call to Order of Regular Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 9:01 a.m. on December 17, 2024, via Zoom and in person at 65 Main Street, Burlington, Vermont by Board Chair Jane Knodell. The following commissioners were present: Bill Schrecker, Kirby Dunn, and Brian Lowe. Also in attendance were Executive Director Steve Murray, Director of Housing Retention Crystal Jones, Director of Property Management Susan Carp, Director of Human Resources Melissa Farnham, Chief Financial Officer Nicholas Hibbard, Housing Retention Specialist Langley Smurthwaite, Rental Assistance Specialist Trista Baker, and Supportive Programs and Services Manager Marissa Darling.

1. Changes to the Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

2. Forum: Resident of BHA Properties/General Public

There was a Zoom participant named Alyssa and another individual who attended in person.

Molly Lawney from the Party for Socialism and Liberation spoke about her opinion on the eviction of Tiffany Harrington last week. Doug Finney read a statement on behalf of another individual regarding evictions. Katie Livermore spoke about her perspective on evictions and the effects on families and children. Cathy Foley spoke about her perspective on evictions.

3. Resident Council

Cathy Foley gave an update on her experience within the building and the limited encounters they have seen. This includes some trash in the stairwells.

4. Board Actions

a. November 26 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

Kirby Dunn noted that the Board had voted to approve the contract effective January 1st, as amended. The start and termination dates needed updates.

Kirby Dunn made a motion to approve the minutes, as corrected. Brian Lowe seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval of the motion.

b. CY2025 Meeting Calendar

There were requested changes to the meeting calendar:

- January 28th agenda will include an item for internal strategic plans discussion and stakeholder item updates.
- There will be a planned Spring walking trip to visit properties to the north of the main offices. This will occur on either a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon.
- February 25th will be moved to February 18th.
- April 29th the meeting will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to discuss and work on the Strategic Plan.
- November 25th will be moved to November 18th.

* Nick Hibbard will send all current Board policies in May 2025 for review and discussion at the August 2025 meeting. A focus will be noted for policies where changes may be required.

Kirby Dunn moved to approve the calendar, as amended. Brian Lowe seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval of the motion.

c. Tenant Selection Plan Modification

There was discussion of the change in language and why the change was necessary.

Kirby Dunn moved to approve the Tenant Selection Plan modification, as presented. Brian Lowe seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval of the motion.

5. Executive Director Report

Steven Murray gave context to evictions and why BHA needs to collect rent. He also explained BHA's fiduciary duty to programs, residents, and staff. He went on to advise how BHA's eviction process works and the many resources that are used prior to the final eviction. Steven Murray noted the amazing work done by Crystal Jones and her Housing Retention team to keep people in their homes. BHA will be meeting with Treatment Court for a discussion on possible ways to work together in the future.

6. Consent Agenda

- Housing Retention**
- Property Management**
- Rental Assistance**
- Human Resources**

Kirby Dunn made a motion to accept the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Bill Schrecker. There was unanimous approval.

There was discussion of HAP funding for the coming year.

7. Security Update – Decker Towers & Other BHA Properties

There was discussion about the availability of the Sheriff for security services at Decker Towers and the sweeps conducted by Censor Security.

*Staff will talk to CHT to discuss their contract with the Sheriff and possible ways to work together on security services.

Steven Murray updated the Board on the townhall meeting at the beginning of December. There was discussion on utilization of a drone to review any encampments that might be at Riverside Apartments over the bank.

8. Tenant/Participant Accountability Discussion

Steven Murray advised of the amount of bad debt written off in the prior year. He also explained how the evictions have worked for non-payment. There was discussion of the collection process. Crystal Jones added that there is accountability on both sides and communication is key to how to get a number of these issues repaired.

*Staff will come back with feedback in February/March about the repayments and their success.

Crystal Jones noted that you can't move or become eligible for a voucher if you owe the landlord amounts for damages.

9. Commissioner Liability Discussion

This item was moved to Executive Session due to relating to contracts with our insurance carrier and legal counsel.

10. Executive Session – Discussion of Possible Real Estate Transactions

Motion to enter executive session: Kirby Dunn made a motion to enter executive session at 10:08 a.m. to discuss real estate transactions and contracts, inviting Nick Hibbard and Steven Murray. Brian Lowe seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

Bill Schrecker left the meeting at 10:56 a.m.

Kirby Dunn made a motion to exit the executive session at 11:04 a.m. Jane Knodell seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

*Add a real estate transaction item to the January meeting, with related financials for Bright Street.

11. Other Business

There being no other business, Brian Lowe made a motion to adjourn at 11:05 a.m. Kirby Dunn second the motion. There was unanimous approval.

DocuSigned by:

Steven Murray
Secretary