

**Burlington Housing Authority
Minutes from the Regular Board of Commissioner Meeting
June 24, 2025**

Call to Order of Regular Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on June 24, 2025, via Zoom and in person at 245 Pine Street, Burlington, Vermont by Board Chair Jane Knodell. The following commissioners were present: Bill Schrecker, Kirby Dunn, Brian Lowe (Phone), and Tony Lewis (Zoom). Also in attendance were Executive Director Steve Murray, Director of Operations Jeff Metcalf, Director of Housing Retention Crystal Jones (Zoom), Director of Property Management Susan Carp, Director of Human Resources Melissa Farnham (Phone), Chief Financial Officer Nicholas Hibbard, and Controller Eric DeBlasio.

Catherine Foley was also in attendance.

1. Changes to the Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

2. Forum: Resident of BHA Properties/General Public

Catherine Foley was present and reported on the successful painting and renovation of the first floor of Decker Towers in which most residents are pleased with the results. She also stated that FSC Security was much more efficient and better than Censor Security. She will be providing BHA with a write-up from the residents. Catherine said that although there is not a need for security guards right now, as soon as the guards left, there is more activity at the problem apartments. Steve Murray updated her that of the 5 apartments with issues, 2 have evictions pending and 1 will be on Monday.

3. Resident Council

There were no resident councils in attendance.

4. Board Actions

a. May 27 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Kirby Dunn made a motion to approve the minutes, as presented. Tony Lewis seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval with Bill Schrecker abstaining.

b. Administrative Plan Modifications

Nick Hibbard reported that Bill Schrecker submitted minor cleanups for clarity. Kirby Dunn asked if the wording for household, family, and tenant be looked at for future changes to the policy. Nick Hibbard said that they have different meanings and came from Nan McKay, but BHA will review them. Kirby Dunn also wanted to make sure the public understand that this is being changed based on HUD recommendations.

The Board commented on the two different options and came to a consensus that Option 1 was the best as Option 2 was a little more arbitrary. Kirby Dunn asked about port outs and how much BHA pays for those. Steve Murray reported about \$17K per month. She also asked about single occupancy households and Nick Hibbard said that they would have the most resources and be able to go out and try and find a job, whereas the elderly and disabled are unable to do that. Some voucher holders have also inherited a voucher when their household qualified in the past. There was also discussion about the \$100K of assets and BHA added this language as it will go into effect when HOTMA goes into effect. Jane Knodell asked if they were listed in priority and Nick Hibbard said they are and will go in that order as needed. Jane Knodell also suggested merging the last two bullet points and noted that the Board would have to have a special meeting if it came to that on short notice.

Bill Schrecker made a motion to approve the Administrative Plan Modifications, with merging the final two bullet points of Option 1. Tony Lewis seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

c. Financial Management and Internal Control Policy and Procedures Manual Updates

Jane Knodell requested an overview of the changes and Nick provided what was outlined in the memo. She also asked about the collection of cash. BHA does not collect cash in policy but sometimes does in practice in reasonable situations like first payments and fraud repayments. Kirby Dunn asked how the 15% would affect BHA and it will be minimal, but nice to have.

Kirby Dunn made a motion to approve the Financial Management and Internal Control Policy Manual Updates, as presented. Brian Lowe seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

d. FY2026 Operating Budget

Nick Hibbard and Eric DeBlasio took feedback from the last Board meeting to make updates to the budget which included vacancy savings, increase in maintenance, and increase in postage. Steve Murray updated the Board that the \$100K innovation fund was considered but would like to keep large dollar items to the budgeting process. It was noted that if something new comes up and is needed, BHA will evaluate and come to the Board if needed. The Board was pleased that there is a process in case this happens.

Bill Schrecker made a motion to approve the FY2026 Operating Budget, as presented. Kirby Dunn seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

e. FY2026-2030 5-Year Capital Plan

Jeff Metcalf reported that he had many meetings with staff throughout the year to get input for the capital plan. He gave an overview of how it was laid out. The goal is to have \$2K per unit in reserves. The only property that was in shortfall was 56 Bright Street, which BHA would use Strategic Reserves to cover the difference when needed. Nick Hibbard, Jeff Metcalf, and Eric DeBlasio looked to see where additional deposits could be made throughout the year with the P&L. Jane Knodell asked what the total amount of deposits for the year was and Eric DeBlasio stated it was \$835K. Nick Hibbard also stated that although there are 5 years listed, a high dollar project could come in year 6 which could drain reserves. He also reported that there could be additional sources of funding, such as grants like what Jeff Metcalf and Crystal Jones have been working on for the elevator upgrades at Decker Towers. Jeff Metcalf also stated he is working with Burlington Electric and Vermont Gas to find savings.

Kirby Dunn made a motion to approve the FY2026-2030 5-Year Capital Plan, as presented. Tony Lewis seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

5. Executive Director Report

Steve Murray gave a shoutout to Susan Carp and her team for hitting net 15 leases. Vacancies at properties are moving in the right direction and believes the only downfall could be the market rate apartments. BHA will need to look at applicants closer to the 80% of median income for those. BHA will also be meeting with the homeless alliance about BHA still doing preferences for PBVs and multi-families.

Steve Murray was also pleased that the HCV numbers for EOPs have gone down to 7 per month which could lead to minimal or no loss by the end of the year. He gave kudos to Stephanie Bixby for the tremendous amount of work her and her team have done.

He also reported on staff attrition, losing a long time property manager, Justin Barros, and a long time and very knowledgeable team leader in rental assistance, Brigid Clary. He informed the Board that Maya Boucher will be returning and working at the Family RAD properties and William Heinz has been doing a great job at Decker Towers.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Housing Retention**
- b. Rental Assistance**
- c. Property Management**
- d. Building Operations**
- e. Asset Management**

f. Human Resources

Kirby Dunn asked about the payroll system change in the Human Resources report. Melissa Farnham stated that the demo and site looked wonderful, but implementation and the software have been a huge struggle. There are basic errors with technology and usability that have hindered staff. Paylocity was so much better in hindsight and BHA will be switching back to them. Financially, the new software was not an issue, and the changes have come with minimal costs. Kirby Dunn asked about the references and everything came back good, but those companies probably had a way to deal with the issues.

Kirby Dunn made a motion to accept the consent agenda, as presented. Bill Schrecker seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

7. Financial Reports – May 2025

Nick stated that everything continues to be steady and maintenance costs will continue to be higher than anticipated due to NSPIRE/REAC/MOR. He also reported that there will be accruals in June, one of note being a payment of over \$100K for the HOPWA grant for the next 3 years. Jane Knodell was wondering where the replacement reserve deposits showed up on the statements and Eric DeBlasio and Nick Hibbard stated they show up on the balance sheet with the changes in balances.

Bill Schrecker made a motion to accept the May 2025 financial report, as presented. Kirby Dunn seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

8. Security Update – Decker Towers & Other BHA Properties

Jeff Metcalf started the conversation acknowledging Catherine Foley's concerns about the trouble units at Decker. BHA has spoken with FSC about hiring them back in the fall, but they will need to be licensed in the state. It was agreed that they were very professional and effective. Nick Hibbard added that BHA will continue installing the new cameras on problem floors based on need. He also reported that the laundry services have been updated to help with security and machines being broken into. Catherine Foley brought up that there is significant activity on the 9th floor with a chemical smell and Steve Murray suggested contacting the police chief to focus on that.

9. CY2025 Housing Choice Voucher Funding Update

Nick Hibbard reported that the numbers are moving in the right direction. BHA has factored in PBVs that will be added in the fall as well as unleased PBVs coming back online. Steve Murray reported a tremendous amount of EOPs for evictions for nonpayment of rent by private landlords. It was also reported that HUD believes there will be shortfall money for the Mainstream program as we are struggling to come close to the numbers we need to hit for that program.

10. Strategic Plan – Next Steps

Jane Knodell gave an overview of the PDF that was sent to the Board and leadership team. She asked if the 4 goals/themes were the right ones for the organization. Everyone agreed that they were what we have been working on, but it will be good to have them in a framework going forward. It was confirmed that those 4 goals and themes would be what the organization will be working on for the next 3 years. There was discussion about external party communication and how and when it should be done.

*Each of the next 4 Board meetings starting in August will focus on one of the themes/goals.

11. Other Business

Steve Murray noted that BHA has not met with the mayor in a while and would like to do so. He offered to invite a Board member, but the Board would like him to handle the meeting this time.

He also gave kudos to Melissa Farnham for getting performance evaluations completed. The bonus will be paid tomorrow. He offered leadership's performance evaluations to the Board, and they did not believe they needed to see them.

The next meeting will be at Riverside on August 26. A parking plan will be sent out before the meeting. The September meeting will be at Decker. Kirby Dunn will miss the September meeting.

Steve stated that CHT is still looking for a replacement for Tony Lewis.

There being no other business, Kirby Dunn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 a.m. Tony Lewis seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

DocuSigned by:

Steven Murray

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Secretary