

**Burlington Housing Authority
Minutes from the Regular Board of Commissioner Meeting
September 30, 2025**

Call to Order of Regular Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 9:09 a.m. on September 30, 2025, via Zoom and in person at 230 St Paul Street, Burlington, Vermont by Board Chair Jane Knodell. The following commissioners were present: Bill Schrecker (Zoom) and Brian Lowe. Also in attendance were Executive Director Steve Murray, Director of Rental Assistance Stephanie Bixby, Director of Housing Retention Crystal Jones (Zoom), Director of Human Resources Melissa Farnham (Zoom), Chief Financial Officer Nicholas Hibbard, and Controller Eric DeBlasio.

Decker Towers resident David Foss was also present.

1. Changes to the Agenda

Jane Knodell suggested deferring the strategic plan to next meeting and was accepted.

2. Forum: Resident of BHA Properties/General Public

David Foss was present. He stated that the building looks so much better and the cooperation between the residents and BHA is great. William Heinz, Danielle Roy, and Steve Murray are doing a great job keeping the building going in the right direction. He also noted that people are struggling because one of the elevators is down and could take up to 20 minutes to get up or down. He suggested temporarily opening the bathrooms in case of emergency. He said the residents are an issue still with letting people that do not belong in the building in but believes the new key cards will help with this. He also believes there is a lot of anger due to federal and local climates and thinks there should be more fun activities planned. He was also concerned about welfare checks on residents. He asked about the next resident commissioner and Jane Knodell noted that Debra Davis would be present at the next meeting. She is a Section 8 voucher holder at a CHT property which is good to get a different perspective.

3. Resident Council

There were no resident councils in attendance.

4. Recognition of Former Commissioner Tony Lewis

Jane Knodell stated that Tony Lewis could not join today. She expressed thankfulness for how long he stayed after his term expired and for his service.

5. Board Actions

a. August 26 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Brian Lowe made a motion to approve the minutes, as presented. Bill Schrecker seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

b. Dissolution Certifications for KSNP & PPHLP

Brian Lowe made a motion to approve the Dissolution Certification for KSNP, as presented. Bill Schrecker seconded the motion.

Brian Lowe asked if the potential real estate transaction in that area was related to these. They are not related. The organization donating is the same, but different altogether.

There was unanimous approval.

Brian Lowe made a motion to approve the Dissolution Certification for PPHLP, as presented. Bill Schrecker seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

6. Executive Director Report

Steve Murray stated KSNRC is looking to donate the property that we have been managing for 27 years to BHA, and this will require a Board vote next month. He included the financial and BHA will continue to manage it until something happens.

Brian Lowe asked about police related updates. Steve Murray stated that the only update is on Shaun Littlefield who ran over woman on Buell Street was one of the drug dealers that was forced out of Wharf. He was not a resident.

Jane Knodell asked about the status of Maple Street Apartments. The location is 174 Maple Street in Burlington. KSNRC is offering it to us to take ownership of it because CHT declined. CHT likely declined because of the inability to roll it into their portfolio. Steve Murray noted that about \$33K is paid in taxes that BHA would not have to pay. BHA will have an attorney to look at it. Bill Schrecker asked about the CNA to make a better decision and that will also be provided.

Jane Knodell asked if AnnaMarie Williams, who joined late, had any comments. She is a resident of Decker Towers in unit 303. She was concerned because she asked Becky Rabin to check on the tenant in unit 203 and she refused. When BHA was notified, they acted, but Becky Rabin did not. Crystal Jones and Steve Murray spoke about it and are doing an investigation into what happened to figure out if this was a mistake or failure in policy. Crystal Jones has spoken to Becky Rabin and will follow up with Steve Murray.

Brian Lowe asked about Sammy McGuire and context for BHA's role. Steve Murray stated BHA does not have experience on running shelters but might be able to help with maintenance. Jane Knodell asked if this was in relation to the pod village and it is not. This is mainly to talk about what the organizations in low-income housing

believe would help the most compared to the politicians and what they proposed would come with a large price tag.

7. Consent Agenda

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

Bill Schrecker and Brian Lowe thanked Directors for the well-presented and concise Consent Agenda.

Bill Schrecker made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, as presented. Brian Lowe seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

8. Financial Reports – July/August 2025

Nick Hibbard reported that the only thing that stands out is administrative fees. HUD sent a notice that they were sending more and then a couple days later, took back some in the reconciliation. There was also discussion about the possible government shutdown. Brian Lowe stated that he is thankful BHA has a plan if this were to happen. BHA is confident we can weather for many months other than HAP. HAP is different because BHA is not allowed to pay out if it is not authorized by HUD. HUD has obligated funds for October and the first two weeks of November, so BHA should be fine until December. BHA cannot make payments with our own money either. BHA does not release funds until they are in our bank account. Jane Knodell asked what would happen if BHA did not send payments. Stephanie Bixby responded by saying it is in the HAP contract and BHA would not be held responsible.

We will have more information on insurance in the fall which is looking much more promising. Our managed properties with Vermont Mutual are only increasing because of property values. Jane Knodell also reported UVM's health insurance is only increasing 5%.

9. Security Update – Decker Towers & Other BHA Properties

Nick Hibbard reported that BHA had 4 conversations recently. One vendor looked professional, but the insurance carrier said no to Section 8 housing. Another vendor that hires security to fulfill contracts also stated their insurance carrier said they do not touch Section 8 housing. Two other local vendors gave us numbers, but BHA needs to confirm their insurance carriers do not preclude Section 8. The security company we used last year, FSC, did not have licensure in Vermont and are looking into it. Steve Murray would like to reach out to Senator Hinsdale to say it is bad to carve out Section 8 housing providers from insurance. Brian Lowe also suggested reaching out to the Department of Financial Regulation. Jane Knodell asked what

fueled the change and Nick Hibbard stated it started with a conversation with Hilltop security where they cannot serve colleges or Lululemon either. Steve Murray also confirmed that the Sheriff's Office is short staffed, so it will be hard for them to supply someone. BHA is looking for an overnight guard between 8pm and 4am in November through April, likely no longer doing sweeps. Brian Lowe also noticed that the City finally caught up with payment from the prior year's agreement. The City said no to continuing funding for now. Brian Lowe also asked if there were any repercussions with the changes to City Hall Park and BHA has not seen any.

David Foss suggested resident education to not let people in. It is frustrating because of the significant progress, but winter is coming. Steve Murray stated he noticed someone who was not a resident use a key card to enter the building before the Board Meeting. He also mentioned that of the 3 drug dealers, 2 are under eviction, and 1 had subsidy pulled.

Brian Lowe thanked Nick Hibbard for the work on getting a security guard for the winter. Law enforcement in the building is more effective than security guards. David Foss stated the Chief has come a few times and wants to help.

10. CY2025 Housing Choice Voucher Funding Update

Stephanie Bixby stated not a lot has changed. BHA is still good under the HCV program. Shortfall funding has been applied for the Mainstream program. HUD is starting to process those October 1. BHA is confident it will come through for Mainstream, but if it does not, we will cross the bridge when that time comes. We can ask HUD to use our own money to backstop. Nick Hibbard said we have been conservative in the \$300K shortfall range whereas HUD is near the \$200K shortfall range. We could probably use our UNP to cover.

Jane Knodell asked about tenants in good standing. BHA has averted needing to remove tenants in good standing. For Mainstream, we have struggled to EOP people off the program. Steve Murray said the Mayor has a copy of the funding memo, so they are in the loop to see where we stand each month.

11. Strategic Plan – Ownership & Accountability

This was deferred to the October meeting.

12. Other Business

Jane Knodell wanted to touch base on the Burlington Progressive Party's Housing Plan for the City. A Board member was approached and was asked if BHA would sign on. This inquiry was forwarded to Jane Knodell, who forwarded the plan to other Commissioners. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that it is in BHA's best interest to be apolitical (not to sign on to statements such as this one, from any source), but to follow local housing policy discussions and collaborate in a positive

way with the City and organizations such as COTS, CHT, CVOEO, and Cathedral Square, which serve low-income households and unhoused members of the community.

A resident of Decker Towers expressed the need for legislation that would allow for a quicker eviction process where there is an emergency situation with residents threatening and stealing from other residents. This would allow tenants to be more secure and be in less danger.

The October meeting will include property acquisition, the report from Diane about stakeholder interviews, and ownership and accountability if there is time. The following topics will be pushed for a month as well.

The December 16th meeting will start at noon and will include October financial statements. It will also include the board meeting calendar for next year.

Either the November or December meeting will have the Personnel Policy.

There being no other business, Brian Lowe made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:09am. Bill Schrecker seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

DocuSigned by:


Steven Murray
Secretary

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