

**Burlington Housing Authority  
Minutes from the Regular Board of Commissioner Meeting  
April 28, 2026**

**Call to Order of Regular Meeting**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on April 28, 2026, 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, and Debra Davis (Zoom). Also in attendance were Executive Director Steve Murray, Director of Rental Assistance Stephanie Bixby, Director of Operations Jeff Metcalf, Director of Housing Retention Crystal Jones (Zoom), Director of Property Management Susan Carp (Zoom), Director of Human Resources Melissa Farnham (Zoom), Chief Financial Officer Nicholas Hibbard, and Controller Eric DeBlasio.

Resident from Decker Towers Catherine Foley (Zoom) and student Maddie Haydock (Zoom) were also in attendance.

**1. Changes to the Agenda**

Jane Knodell added an Executive Session to discuss Personnel Matters.

**2. Forum: Residents of BHA Properties/General Public**

Catherine Foley will add comments to the security updates section.

**3. Resident Council**

No Resident Councils were present.

**4. Board Actions**

**a. March 31 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes**

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

**5. Executive Director Report**

Steve Murray gave a shoutout to Crystal Jones and Jeff Metcalf for their \$1.3 million federal appropriations advancing through Representative Balint's office. If there is no Continuing Resolution, there is a good chance that BHA will receive the money, and BHA might be the go-to for congressional funding going forward.

He also reported that BHA has not received our funding notice from HUD yet, which is past the 60 days required by law. We have an idea of the dollar amount, but we are holding off on leasing until we receive the actual notice. Stephanie Bixby is allowing participants to come up with good plans to continue to stay on the program, as we do not need EOPs.

Susan Carp is setting up a VAWA training course with Paul, Frank, & Collins and would like to have a member of the Board have the training as well. Many participants are using this as a last chance effort to overturn decisions, and it is not being used as it is designed to be used. BHA fully supports the VAWA Act with its intended use.

Steve Murray noted that the Retention Department will be looking at adding a vehicle in the next fiscal year in this will be in the budget cycle. There have been issues with employees transporting participants in their person vehicles. Jane Knodell noted that this issue was reported in the Finance Committee meeting.

Brian Lowe asked if we had received the memo about the CES money for the elevators yet and Jeff Metcalf reported that we have not. Brian Lowe and Kirby Dunn suggested that we reach out to all our Congressional delegates to try to get things moving forward faster. Jeff Metcalf will follow up with our HUD representative and Steve Murray will follow up with Representative Balint's office.

Jane Knodell asked for more information about what was happening with VAWA claims and it was reported that there has been an uptick in claims, and when we send them in for legal review, they do not meet the requirements of the Act.

## **6. Elevator Update – Decker Towers & South Square**

Jeff Metcalf stated that the 101 College elevator modernization has been completed, but there have been issues with the elevator doors closing too quickly. He also reported that the Decker elevator drive that cost \$39K has been ordered and should be delivered next week. We are hoping this will resolve the issues and will allow us to start the modernization of the elevators. Steve Murray noted that BHA is moving forward with repairs of the elevators even if the grant money does not come in.

It was asked how the emergency protocol work with the committee was going. Jeff Metcalf reported that it was going well and BHA is looking to finalize it in May. Catherine Foley stated that there was a presentation and the people who attended got the word out by taking the BHA plan and delivering it to everyone's door. Their goal was to stop the negative press and kill the rumor mill.

## **7. Consent Agenda**

### **a. Housing Retention**

Brian Lowe asked about financial impacts people are facing. Crystal Jones stated that it is consistent from month to month and is usually one-off spending things like an emergency which leads them to back rent. They are seeing a lot more domestic violence which leads to financial control within the household. Volume in cases has increased exponentially over time.

### **b. Rental Assistance**

Jane Knodell asked about PBVs and fewer opportunities for those who are not homeless and to have access to new units. Stephanie Bixby reported that this goes to VHCB and percentage of state money goes to homeless. It is becoming lopsided and strict for those exiting homelessness.

Bill Schrecker stated for competitive VHFA financing, 25% of new units are committed to folks exiting homelessness. There are not many affordable units for 25% AMI. This is a larger problem outside of BHA district area and even larger problem in other parts of the State.

Stephanie Bixby is working to get wording out to the public to inform people that they can make a certain amount of money and still be able to get a subsidized unit.

- c. Property Management**
- d. Asset Management**
- e. Building Operations**

Brian Lowe asked about the iPads and the turnover process in the department. Jeff Metcalf reported that currently, they use handwritten forms which are generated from PHA Web. If they have iPads, they can do it all on PHA Web, electronically, which will be much quicker, leads to less mistakes, and less duplication. Property managers will also be able to investigate the work orders too. Nick Hibbard reported that iPads have been ordered for all technicians. Jeff Metcalf reported for turnovers the department gets 3 or 4 done and then get 4 or 5 back. It is a costly process. Damage is also a big problem, especially with kitchen cabinetry and painting. We are replacing flooring with LVP. The department is short on staff as well but has just hired a new technician who will start on Thursday. We also hired a company to do cleaning that can do a turnover in one or two days.

- f. Human Resources**

Brian Lowe noted that there was a decline in views of communication of leadership. Melissa Farnham stated that there was concern about confidentiality so full comments from staff were not on here. The Board was interested in the comments because there was not a lot of context for why there was a decline in view of leadership. Nick Hibbard stated that leadership knows the staff and how they write and a lot of their views, so they can mostly connect who says what, so that is why the comments were scrubbed. Brian Lowe said he was comfortable with hearing from leadership about the survey. Melissa Farnham also stated that there was a comparison between the last survey and this survey that would be sent separately.

\*A discussion about the survey will be added to the next board meeting.

Brian Lowe made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. Kirby Dunn seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

## **8. March 2026 Financials**

Nick Hibbard stated that maintenance is up a lot and this is the biggest concern going into the last quarter since we do not foresee it going down due to turnovers and general maintenance, including elevator repairs. We are also using higher quality materials to get better life out of things. Internal work order trends also are not making complete sense currently and we are looking into why. Utilities are also increasing due to rate increases and we are working with property managers to mitigate where possible.

There are some issues with cash positions such as Family and Elderly RAD which we usually take distributions from to cover the Program side. Multi-Family is doing well.

Brian Lowe said he was expecting maintenance costs to be high as we telegraphed them throughout the year noting all the turnovers.

It was also noted that we decreased the asking rent for 3-bedroom units in Duggan Row. This has led to increased interest in those units. Once those are filled, we will have to drop the rent across all the 3-bedroom units across the property, but we will make more due to less vacancies.

\*Bill Schrecker requested to include the program, income limits, and bedroom sizes for vacant units in the Board Reports going forward.

Kirby Dunn made a motion to accept the March 2026 Financials, as presented. Brian Lowe seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

## **9. Security Update – Decker Towers & Other BHA Properties**

Jeff Metcalf noted that security services have not changed with sweeps from the Sheriff's department, but there has been an uptick in drug activity isolated to a few units at Decker.

Catherine Foley also emphasized the uptick in drug activity for a few units in Decker. The greater cause of this is them moving closer to the Decker area and trying to infiltrate and use Decker residents. Residents are now trying to flood the Burlington Police Department with pictures, film, and evidence of drug activity to get more of a response. Catherine Foley recently gave a copy of a no trespass order to a former resident who was trying to deal drugs. She believes the problem would be fixed if these people were arrested.

Debra Davis asked how the residents of Decker were involved. Catherine Foley responded by saying that there have been issues with the Resident Council with

information not being shared, but neighborhood watch is aware of what is happening. They need to do a better job of reaching out to BPD and City Council.

Kirby Dunn stated that the Mayor asked at the last meeting what she could do to help and we could go back to her and let her know. Catherine Foley responded by saying Decker is still in a good spot, it is just a drug problem now. BHA should consider more time with the Sherrif and Jeff stated that if they have the bandwidth, we will extend.

Jane Knodell noted that there is a bill in the legislature with language about accelerating evictions and restricting access to buildings, which could help us.

\*Brian Lowe will set up a meeting with the police, chief of staff, state's attorney, CHT, and Catherine Foley again to go over the issues again.

Stephanie Bixby noted that many residents at other properties want their property managers to do what we did at Decker.

## **10. CY2026 Housing Choice Voucher Funding Update**

Stephanie Bixby noted that the funding notice has not been received. We are making plans for when we can start issuing vouchers. Our HUD representative in Boston did see a draft. We are still hesitant to believe in good news and to jump the gun. We are trying to retain as many vouchers as possible.

## **11. Other Business**

The May meeting will be the longer 3-hour meeting including the Budget, Survey, and Strategic Plan.

\*Jane Knodell will send the summary document again to include it in the Board packet for the next meeting.

The Finance Committee will meet again on May 11 at 3:30 p.m. There is a placeholder in budget for consulting of \$10K.

Kirby Dunn made a motion to enter the Executive Session to discuss Personnel Matters at 9:59 a.m. Bill Schrecker seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

At 10:07 a.m. Kirby Dunn made a motion to exit the Executive Session. Brian Lowe seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

There being no other business, Kirby Dunn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:07 a.m. Bill Schrecker seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

DocuSigned by:

*Steven Murray*

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Secretary