

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
 COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
 CITY OF ROANOKE REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Commissioners of the City of Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority met for a regular session on Monday, January 22, 2018, in the offices of the City of Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority, 2624 Salem Turnpike, NW, in the City of Roanoke, Virginia.

**I. CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL**

Chair Burruss called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and declared that a quorum was present.

PRESENT:	Commissioners Anguiano, Burruss, Garner, Karnes, Kepley, and Smith
ABSENT:	Commissioner Witten
OFFICER PRESENT:	Mrs. Glenda Edwards Goh, Secretary-Treasurer
ALSO PRESENT:	Jackie Austin, VP of Finance/CFO; David Bustamante, VP of Housing; Stephanie Cooperstein, Section 3 Coordinator; Betsy Crow, VP of Human Resources and Administration; John Garland, Roanoke City Council Liaison; Frederick Gusler, Director of Redevelopment and Revitalization; Crystal Hall, Community Support Services Director; Mark Loftis, Legal Counsel; Joel Shank, VP of Operations; Kelly Martin, Senior Executive Assistant

Chair Burruss welcomed everyone to today's meeting.

**II. REPORTS**

1. Financial Report

Chair Burruss stated that Mrs. Austin provided a Financial Narrative along with

a Financial Report.

Chair Burruss asked if there were any comments or questions.

Referring to Private Management on page 19 of the report, Vice Chair Garner asked for clarification as to why the accrued liabilities amount on the balance sheet more than tripled. Mrs. Austin stated that Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) is in the process of making accrual entries in preparation for the audits. Some of this increase is related to payroll and obligations that were not paid in full at the end of the year for December 2017. Mrs. Austin stated that RRHA also had a number of bills come in at the end of the month.

Vice Chair Garner inquired as to the source of the SJ Program Income listed on page 36 of the report. Mrs. Austin explained that RRHA receives program income related to the South Jefferson Redevelopment Plan; however, there is not a whole lot of activity occurring in that program at this time. Mrs. Goh added that it may reflect the rent RRHA collects from the tire company renting space at the Stegall property, which Mrs. Austin confirmed.

Vice Chair Garner requested additional information concerning the Public Housing reserve amounts listed for some sites. Mrs. Austin clarified that some of the Public Housing properties locations are using reserves to fund expenses. These expenses and use of reserves were included in the budget.

Commissioner Anguiano's asked whether the \$316,000 loan receivable was the same loan that was discussed last month, she confirmed that it was and it is listed for accounting purposes.

Chair Burruss asked if there were any other comments or questions. There

were none.

## 2. Executive Director's Report

Chair Burruss asked for the Executive Director's report.

Mrs. Goh stated that she had intended to talk about the government shutdown; however, it appears that has been resolved today with a vote in the Senate that broke the filibuster. A Continuing Resolution for three more weeks has been approved.

Mrs. Goh explained that in the event of a shutdown, HUD staff are not available to provide technical assistance or communicate with housing authorities, which does not have significant impact on RRHA's day to day operations. She stated that the concern would be what happens when it comes time to make Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) to RRHA's landlords in the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV). Mrs. Goh went on to explain that RRHA is not allowed to hold HAP reserves by HUD policy and, at the current time, RRHA has no HAP reserves. HUD provides RRHA's funding for the HAP payments at the first of each month. If the government is not operating and/or funds have not been appropriated, then RRHA will not receive funding from HUD to make the payments RRHA is contractually obligated to make at the first of the month. Mrs. Goh spoke with Mrs. Austin and Mr. Bustamante last week concerning this situation. They determined that it appears RRHA will be able to sustain one month if the government shuts down, due to having administrative reserves in the HCV program. Mrs. Goh stated that Mr. Bustamante compared this to RRHA accepting a promissory note from HUD and having faith that HUD would give the money back when the government reopened and appropriated the funds. RRHA had sufficient administrative funds to get through February if the shutdown had continued,

but would not be able to make the payments if a shutdown continued into a second month. She stated that the program expends over \$900,000 per month in landlord payments. Mrs. Goh said that RRHA will not have to use the administrative funds at this time because the government shutdown is ending and a Continuing Resolution will provide funding.

Mrs. Goh informed Commissioners that RRHA and the Roanoke City Police Department have extended the Intergovernmental Agreement for above-baseline policing services. Mrs. Goh said the agreement will not be presented for Board approval because it is a time extension only. The Board originally authorized a not-to-exceed amount of \$400,000, which was based upon the estimates staff completed two years ago. She stated that, at this point, RRHA has spent approximately \$150,000 so there are still adequate funds out of what has already been authorized to fund a two year extension of the agreement.

Mrs. Goh informed the Board that RRHA will participate in the Book Rich Environments Initiative for a second year. She said that she and Ms. Hall met with Sheila Umberger and two library staff members to discuss the commitments required of RRHA and the library and to formulate an action plan for this year's Book Rich Environments planning and events schedule. RRHA has submitted a commitment to participate for another year, which will mean more new books donated for kids living in public housing. Mrs. Goh stated that it was a good program, and she is glad it is being continued. She explained that RRHA is making plans to do things a little differently this year, in part because the definition of who is eligible to receive the books has been expanded to include children in the HCV program.

Mrs. Goh stated that RRHA has been invited by the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, to participate in a new initiative to combat sexual harassment in housing programs. Mrs. Goh and Ms. Hall will be attending a meeting at the US Attorney's office on Thursday, January 25, 2018, to clarify the purpose of the initiative and what they are asking RRHA to do as far as participation is concerned.

Mrs. Goh informed Commissioners that a notice for public comment has been published in the federal register for the EnVision Centers Demonstration Program. She explained that the EnVision Centers initiative is the new program that will replace the Jobs-Plus program. Agencies that have received Choice Neighborhoods or Jobs-Plus grants in the past are eligible to compete for the opportunity to participate in the EnVision Centers initiative. Ms. Hall will speak about this further in her presentation. Mrs. Goh said that RRHA staff are excited about the opportunity, which will be different than Jobs-Plus but which will provide resources to help individuals get jobs.

Chair Burruss inquired about the final schedule for 2018 Annual Plan Community Meetings. Mrs. Goh explained that RRHA goes through a process to confirm that all necessary staff and meeting space are reserved before finalizing the schedule. She said that the final dates will be provided to Commissioners within the next week.

Commissioner Anguiano asked for an update concerning Smoke-Free Policy implementation. He stated that he understands that the policy will be brought to the Board at a later time but asked whether there is any information that can be shared.

Mrs. Goh asked Mr. Bustamante to respond to the question. Mrs. Goh mentioned that RRHA has already sent out the lease amendment for comment. Mr.

Bustamante added that the phone calls received were asking for RRHA to rescind the Smoking Policy, which is not on the table at this time. No additional input has been received. Mr. Bustamante will present the Smoke-Free Policy to the Board in March.

Vice Chair Garner asked about the cost associated with implementation of the Smoke-Free Policy, such as signage, receptacles, and so forth. Mr. Bustamante replied that it will cost RRHA money in administrative time as well as signage and receptacles for cigarette butts. He stated that he estimates this will be a moderate expense for RRHA. Mr. Bustamante responded to Commissioner Anguiano's inquiry as to where individuals will go to smoke within the facility. Mr. Bustamante stated that Mr. Shank had the A&E firm come out to each site to complete drawings with measurements showing where designated smoking areas could be placed. He explained further that some RRHA locations have areas that can be easily accessed by residents; however, some sites, such as Lansdowne, are much more challenging to identify designated smoking areas due to topography.

Mrs. Goh added that RRHA hopes to work with the residents concerning the enforcement of the Smoke-Free Policy and asked Mr. Bustamante to summarize the current draft policy's enforcement provisions. Mr. Bustamante stated that after the first offense the tenant can agree to the smoking cessation program. If the tenant agrees to the program the first offense will be rescinded and the offense count will start over. He said that residents will be allowed four warnings and then they will be taken to court for eviction. Vice Chair Garner inquired about smoking cessation programs. Mr. Bustamante stated that Ms. Hall has been in contact with Carillion Clinic, and Carillion will be offering the program at each site for resident participation.

Vice Chair Garner inquired about the heating situation that took place last week. He said it was his understanding that some residents were placed in a hotel, and he asked about the cost and how the expense is handled. Mrs. Goh said that the heat repair comes out of RRHA's maintenance budget but, when RRHA has to put people in hotels, it comes out of the housing site's operating budget.

Mr. Bustamante responded to Commissioner Garner's concern about the residents, stating that everyone has been taken care of and residents are back in their own units. Mr. Bustamante went on to say that there is a current situation with a boiler on Delta Drive that is being repaired. He stated the contractors were able to make short-term adjustments so that everyone has heat, and they will come back to make permanent repairs.

Commissioner Kepley asked if any of the smoking areas have to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant or include a special handicap ramp. Mr. Bustamante explained that the areas are not required to be ADA compliant.

Chair Burruss asked if there were any other comments or questions. There were none.

### 3. Staff Reports

Ms. Hall updated the Board on Jobs-Plus and the new EnVision Centers initiative. She began by explaining that RRHA has a four year Jobs-Plus grant, which provides resources to help individuals secure survival jobs to meet their everyday needs, as well as training for long-term living wage employment. Ms. Hall said it is easier to convince someone to go get a job right now, than it is to convince them that they need to go through training that may take twelve weeks. The person needs to

have the ability to see way out in the future and how it will benefit them but, in the end, it is their decision whether they pursue those opportunities.

Ms. Hall said that RRHA is exploring avenues for sustainability because the Jobs-Plus grant ends in 2019. Ms. Hall explained that a lot of time and effort has gone into helping Lansdowne residents get jobs, achieve stability, and access childcare and transportation, and residents have made a lot of progress.

Ms. Hall introduced the EnVision Centers Demonstration Program and clarified that there are only ten sites to be chosen nationwide. She said that she is hopeful RRHA will be one of the ten, but there is no way of knowing at this time. The challenge is to keep the progress that has been made and continue it into the future.

Ms. Hall expressed concern about what HUD is calling the cliff effect, which occurs at the end of the four year grant period. Ms. Hall reminded the Board that one of the pillars of the Jobs-Plus grant is called Jobs-Plus Earned Income Disallowance or Disregard (JPEID). She explained that JPEID basically means that if someone is paying \$50 per month in rent when they enter Jobs-Plus, then through employment, the rent increases to \$550 per month, the resident continues to pay \$50, and the grant pays the additional \$500. Ms. Hall explained that this process provides an opportunity for residents to save some money. She stated that, when the grant ends, the resident will be responsible for paying the full \$550 rent amount. Ms. Hall noted that there is a concern that residents will quit their jobs so that they can revert to \$50 rent. Ms. Hall stated that not everyone has a \$50 rent, but this illustrates the concern. She went on to say that Jobs-Plus goal is to move individuals into self-sufficiency. Ms. Hall explained that part of the path to self-sufficiency is helping individuals learn to pay

their bills on time each month and plan ahead. Ms. Hall stated that she has come to realize that self-regulation is a learned behavior. For individuals who were not taught such skills in their early life, the changes can be challenging. She said that teaching these skills is a part of what the Jobs-Plus program is attempting to accomplish.

Ms. Hall shared that one strategy that has been implemented in the Jobs-Plus program is notifying residents that the program will not pay their rent increase unless the residents have paid their portion. Most residents who had not been paying brought their balances current upon receiving this notification. Ms. Hall stated that RRHA is planning to continue this practice until the end of the grant; hopefully, people will get used to the idea that they pay their rent every month at the beginning of the month.

Ms. Hall added that she plans to speak with HUD about creating escrow accounts for some residents so that between now and the end of the grant, residents resident could pay a little more toward their portion of the rent and that part could go into an escrow account. She said that this will allow residents to transition to paying the higher rent amount, while also providing additional savings accounts.

Ms. Hall informed the Board that the most extreme rent situation among Jobs-Plus participants is a couple where neither person was working when they joined the program. She said that their rent was \$50 at that time and now both have jobs, and their rent has increased to \$889. Jobs-Plus is paying all of the rent except for \$50. Ms. Hall stressed that for a resident to go from paying \$50 during the grant to \$889 as soon as the grant ends will be extremely challenging. She added that this is why staff is trying to work out an avenue for participants to transition gradually to the higher rent amount.

Ms. Hall also mentioned that another idea under consideration is having mandatory financial management classes for participants involved with JPEID. Ms. Hall stated that, additionally, Jobs-Plus is working with property management to ensure that individuals who are having issues paying their rent get referred to Jobs-Plus, if they are not already in the program. She said that Jobs-Plus is trying to change the culture to one which values work for every individual who is able to work. She stated that residents looking to the left and right and seeing their neighbors going to work will create positive peer pressure.

Ms. Hall explained that at this time RRHA does not know what will happen with the EnVision Centers or what kind of funding will be available, but she would really hate to lose all of the progress that has been achieved with Jobs-Plus.

Ms. Hall explained that HUD says that the EnVision Centers were created around intentional and collective efforts across a diverse set of organizations all of which are needed to implement a holistic approach to foster long lasting self-sufficiency. She reminded the Board that Jobs-Plus has three pillars, and said that four pillars of opportunity will be involved in the EnVision Centers initiative. Ms. Hall said the first pillar is Economic Empowerment; the second is Educational Advancement; the third is Health and Wellness; and the fourth is Character and Leadership. She stated that the fourth pillar, Character and Leadership, has been added mainly for teenagers. Ms. Hall went on to say that RRHA Jobs-Plus staff have already been in touch with individuals from HUD in Washington and Virginia Tech who are interested in working with RRHA to implement a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) program for the kids. Ms. Hall said that the residents

will have the opportunity to engage with the EnVision Centers in three different ways. They can go to the EnVision Centers physically. She said that the second way is that HUD created an EnVision Centers app that can be downloaded although, at this time, the app only shows general parts of the EnVision Centers. Ms. Hall stated that she believes that once the ten EnVision Centers Cities are named, the app will be individualized for those cities. She said that residents can also engage by visiting the actual partner organizations for the EnVision Centers. Ms. Hall stated that EnVision Centers are really an extension of what RRHA has been doing with Jobs-Plus, involving a lot of partner organizations coming together to work through a holistic approach. Ms. Hall said that it is important to look at every area of life because people's lives are not compartmentalized. If one area of life falls apart then pretty much everything is going to crumble. Ms. Hall explained that HUD will announce the first of the EnVision Centers after March 5, 2018, and hopefully, RRHA will know this spring whether RRHA is selected.

In response to a question from Vice Chair Garner, Ms. Hall stated that the letter of commitment must be submitted by February 12, 2018, and HUD will notify the chosen cities in March 2018.

Mrs. Goh added that at this point the application consists of a letter of commitment that would be signed by herself, the Mayor and the Executive Director of the Council of Community Services as the nonprofit partner. This is due to the fact that the council serves as a coordinating entity for the people portion of the Choice Neighborhoods Plan and for the supportive service partnerships for Jobs-Plus. Each of the signatures reflects a commitment to work in partnership to support this

approach. Ms. Hall explained that there will be more steps if RRHA is invited to participate.

In response to Chair Burruss' inquiry, Ms. Hall confirmed that there will be ten centers nationwide, one from each HUD region.

Mrs. Goh added that RRHA was one of nine housing authorities nationwide to receive the Jobs-Plus grant in the first round. RRHA was one of seventeen in the nation receiving a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant in 2012. Although this will certainly be a competitive process, she and others on the RRHA staff are hopeful and optimistic about the opportunity.

Vice Chair Garner asked Ms. Hall to review the pillars of the the EnVision Centers. Ms. Hall stated that they are Economic Empowerment; Educational Advancement; Health and Wellness; and Character and Leadership. She explained that these pillars differ a little from Jobs-Plus. Jobs-Plus has three pillars. The first one is JPEID, which is the rent incentive that she spoke about earlier; the second is employment services; the third is community support for work.

Vice Chair Garner asked if Jobs-Plus is working in conjunction with Goodwill and what the results have been.

Ms. Hall responded that Jobs-Plus is connecting residents with actual training providers like Goodwill, Arnold R. Burton, and Virginia Western. She explained that trying to help someone see the value of taking a class that is going to help them a year down the road when they say they just need a job and need to pay their bills today is one of the biggest challenges in the program. She stated that, when individuals are raised in poverty, they learn to live in crisis mode. For example, they

do not know where their next meal is coming from; they do not know how to get their child to childcare; they do not know how they will receive medical treatment; a lot of those situations result in crisis. She explained that people in that environment become very today oriented because they have to survive today. Ms. Hall stated that Jobs-Plus staff encounter this mindset regularly, and this makes achieving results in the area of training with an eye to long term goals more challenging.

Ms. Hall said that since the last time she spoke with the Board the employment rate has actually gone down slightly but a lot of that has to do with the fact that the number of individuals who are able to work numbers has decreased approximately eleven percent. This has reduced the employment rate slightly. Jobs-Plus started at a thirty-seven percent employment rate and she believes it is now at fifty percent. Ms. Hall stated that the highest rate was at fifty-four percent. Chair Burruss asked if that was fifty-four percent of all Lansdowne age eligible workers. Ms. Hall explained that it was from the ages of 18 to 62.

In response to a question from Vice Chair Garner regarding collaboration between Jobs-Plus and Section 3, Ms. Hall stated Mrs. Cooperstein works collaboratively with Jobs-Plus staff and the rest of the resident services staff as well. Jobs-Plus staff is constantly on the lookout for residents who are qualified or able to complete or who could move into Section 3 job opportunities.

Vice Chair Garner asked if all contractors are encouraged to hire Section 3 residents if possible. Mrs. Goh confirmed that all contractors are encouraged to hire Section 3 residents and, by HUD's definition, everyone in public housing is a Section 3 resident.

Commissioner Anguiano commented that some of these individuals may have not been raised in situations where they were taught a lot about deferred gratification. Hopefully a lot of them will be able to develop those skills, which will work to their future benefit.

Chair Burruss asked if there were any other staff reports, comments or questions. There were none.

#### 4. Committee Reports

Commissioner Karnes mentioned that the Personnel Committee met and they discussed some issues regarding health insurance, items that will ultimately come to the Board.

Commissioner Anguiano said the Legislative Committee did not meet this month but, at the meeting next month, the committee will be discussing some of the economic opportunities that public housing creates. The committee will then develop communication to legislators to help educate them regarding the fact that funding for these programs is an investment in our community.

Chair Burruss asked if there were any other committee reports, comments or questions. There were none.

#### 5. Commissioner Comments

Chair Burruss asked if there were any Commissioner comments. There were none.

#### 6. City Council Liaison Comments or Discussion

Council Member Garland noted that the City just received a contract bid for the new Melrose Library and Goodwill facility. They came in on budget so that project

should begin very soon. When that happens, the old library building will be empty. The City does not have anything in mind right now, but Council Member Garland encouraged anyone with ideas and thoughts to submit their suggestions.

Council Member Garland said that community meetings are ongoing in the Melrose-Orange target area, where the City's is focusing efforts with HUD funds for the next four years. Mr. Gusler is aware of that because he represents RRHA in those meetings. Council Member Garland stated that he would like to make sure that RRHA continues to be involved with the community meetings as to how the funds might best be spent. It looks like most of the money will be spent over at 24<sup>th</sup> Street at Melrose in the little community village area.

Council Member Garland went on to inform the Board that the Shaffer's Crossing walkway platform is scheduled to be repaired, which is important to anyone who might ride a bike or walk to work. He explained that if someone travels through there now they can only get about half way through before they reach a barrier.

Council Member Garland also asked everyone to let him know if they had any questions or if they had anything they wanted him to take back to City Council.

Council Member Garland said that he knew RRHA would enjoy having Commissioner Kepley on board. Council Member Garland has worked with him, and he is a talented architect who will bring a lot to the table.

Chair Burruss asked if the Melrose Library is structurally in good shape. Council Member Garland responded that as far as he knows it is in good condition. He did clarify that it needs to be more modern and bigger, which the new library will be. Council Member Garland stated that the Melrose Library could be used as it is and he

is not aware of any problems.

Mrs. Goh added that she has heard of a number of ideas for the library building, the latest being that it might be a perfect place to put an EnVision Center if RRHA is selected as one of the communities.

Council Member Garland responded that if RRHA does have something like that in mind it would never be too early to present the idea to City Council.

Council Member Garland replied to Chair Burruss' inquiry regarding the acreage at the library, stating that there is a good amount of land there because the City owns not only the library parcel but also the park. He stated that the park is scheduled for the single family housing development if funding is secured. The park would be moved to the Lansdowne Park side of Salem Turnpike.

Chair Burruss said that the EnVision Center may be more compelling for residents if it is separated from their housing environment.

Chair Burruss asked if there were any additional questions. There were none.

7. Residents or other community members to address the Board

Chair Burruss asked if there were any residents or community members who would like to address the Board. There were none.

### **III. CONSENT AGENDA**

C-1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners held  
Monday, December 18, 2017.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Dispense with the reading thereof and approve as recorded.

C-2 Monthly Operations Report for the month of December 2017.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: File as submitted

Vice Chair Karnes introduced a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Anguiano and upon roll call the following vote was recorded:

AYES: Commissioners Anguiano, Burruss, Garner, Karnes, Kepley, and Smith

NAYS: None

Chair Burruss thereupon declared said motion carried as introduced.

#### IV. **REGULAR AGENDA**

##### 1. Resolution No. 3945

Ms. Goh introduced Resolution No. 3945, to recognize and express appreciation for Gilbert Butler's service on the Board. She stated that Mr. Butler served on the Board for almost 12 years, from December 4, 2006 to January 2, 2018. Mrs. Goh said that it has been the practice of this Board when Commissioners who have served leave the Board to approve such a resolution upon departure of a Commissioner and then present the former Commissioner with a framed version signed by the Chair to keep as a reminder of RRHA's appreciation for his service.

Commissioner Smith introduced a motion to approve Resolution No. 3945. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Karnes and upon roll call the following vote was recorded:

AYES: Commissioners Anguiano, Burruss, Garner, Karnes, Kepley, and Smith

NAYS: None

Chair Burruss thereupon declared said motion carried as introduced.

2. Executive Session

Vice Chair Karnes moved that the Commissioners enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion of specific personnel matters of the RRHA in accordance with Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1).

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and upon roll call the following vote was recorded:

AYES: Commissioners Anguiano, Burruss, Garner, Karnes, Kepley, and Smith

NAYS: None

The Board of Commissioners entered into Executive Session at 3:50 p.m.

The Board reconvened into open session at 4:00 p.m.

Vice Chair Garner introduced a motion stating that the members of the Board of Commissioners hereby certify to the best of their knowledge that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered by the Board in the immediately preceding Executive Session.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and upon roll call the following vote was recorded:

AYES: Commissioners Anguiano, Burruss, Garner, Karnes, Kepley, and Smith

NAYS: None

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Vice Chair Garner moved that the meeting be adjourned.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and upon roll call the following vote was recorded:

AYES: Commissioners Anguiano, Burruss, Garner, Karnes, Kepley, and Smith

NAYS: None

Chair Burruss declared the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.



Gail Burruss, Chair



Glenda Edwards Goh, Secretary-Treasurer

