

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 on Monday, July 28, 2025.

I. CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Carter, Walker, Wright, Chair Kepley, Vice Chair Carr

ABSENT: Commissioners Coles, Karney

OFFICER PRESENT: Mr. David Bustamante, Secretary-Treasurer

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Loftis, Legal Counsel; Joel Shank, VP of Operations; Jackie Austin, VP of Finance/CFO; Tina Bousman, Human Resources Manager; Meghan Castañeda, Administrative Manager/Executive Assistant; Fredrick Gusler, Director of Redevelopment and Revitalization; Brenda Prieto, Manager of PR/MKTG/SM; Lisa Saunders, Property Manager II.

Chair Kepley welcomed everyone to today's meeting and introduced Mr. Bustamante to share the Executive Report.

II. REPORTS

1. Executive Report

Mr. Bustamante began his report with a summary of federal appropriations activity, stating the U.S. Senate had released its fiscal year 2026 HUD

appropriations bill on July 24th, following the House's release on July 13th. He noted, unlike the President's budget, neither the House nor Senate proposals included a plan to consolidate tenant-based rental assistance into block grants, which was considered a positive development.

He provided a series of funding highlights comparing fiscal year 2026 proposals to 2025:

- Public Housing Operating Fund: \$4.8 billion proposed—a decrease of \$603 million from FY2025.
- Operating Fund Shortfall: \$214 million proposed—an increase of \$189 million from FY2025.
- Capital Fund: Maintained at \$3.2 billion.
- Section 8 Voucher Renewals: \$33 billion proposed—an increase of \$1.8 billion.
- Administrative Fees: \$2.9 billion proposed—up \$135 million.
- Tenant Protection Vouchers: \$430 million—up \$93 million.
- Mainstream Vouchers: \$810 million—up \$67 million.
- CDBG (Community Development Block Grant): \$3.1 billion—down \$200 million.
- Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Programs: \$156 million—up \$15 million.
- ROSS Program: \$45 million—up \$5 million.
- Jobs Plus Program: \$10 million—down \$5 million.

Mr. Bustamante cautioned the Senate's proposed budget still needed to be refined and voted on, meaning figures could change. He also shared the bill

referenced the possibility of implementing time limits on housing assistance, similar to a two-year limit proposed by the President. However, no specific timeline or procedural details had yet been announced. Mr. Bustamante committed to updating the Board once further information became available.

Next, Mr. Bustamante reminded members the State of the City address was scheduled for August 21st at the Hotel Roanoke. Breakfast would begin at 7:30 a.m., followed by the main program from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. He invited commissioners to RSVP to Ms. Castaneda so any unclaimed seats at the Authority's table could be offered to staff.

He also announced his appointment to a new citywide initiative, the Hope and Home Task Force, formed by the Mayor to address homelessness in Roanoke. Mr. Bustamante shared he accepted the invitation and will represent the Authority as the task force commences its work.

Following this, Chair Kepley inquired about leasing performance. Mr. Bustamante responded most properties were leasing at above 93%, though Jamestown and Morningside continued to experience challenges. These issues were primarily attributed to recent evictions and delays in unit turnover. He added while efforts were being made to handle unit turns internally, external contractors were sometimes used, especially when preparing for HUD inspections.

Chair Kepley asked about the cost of unit turnovers. Mr. Bustamante stated expenses varied significantly based on unit condition, ranging from approximately \$5,000 to \$10,000 per unit. While the preference was to avoid contractor expenses, the urgency of housing new families occasionally

necessitated outsourcing.

Chair Kepley thanked Mr. Bustamante for his report. Hearing no further questions from commissioners, he proceeded to the next item on the agenda: staff reports.

2. Staff Reports

Mr. Gusler addressed the Board to revisit a topic previously discussed on multiple occasions: the proposed Section 18 Disposition Application for three buildings, consisting of 24 units, located at Indian Rock Village. He informed the Board the Authority had been collaborating with the City of Roanoke's Storm Water Division, which had obtained a Department of Conservation and Recreation grant to acquire the property. The city's intent was to use the land for the expansion of the Tinker Creek Greenway.

Mr. Gusler explained the units in question were located within a floodway, not just a floodplain—a critical distinction, as floodway properties are virtually undevelopable under current zoning and FEMA regulations. FEMA flood maps, adopted in the city's zoning ordinance, confirmed all three buildings fell within the dark blue floodway zone, making them particularly vulnerable and subject to significant redevelopment restrictions. Any future extensive renovations or rebuilds on the site would be severely limited or cost-prohibitive, due to regulatory requirements such as elevating mechanical systems above flood elevation levels.

He noted while severe flooding on this site was unlikely, recent events in Texas had demonstrated the dangers of leaving properties in vulnerable zones.

This property represented the only one in the Authority's portfolio situated within a designated floodway, reinforcing the urgency of a proactive approach.

Mr. Gusler reported the city's appraisal valued the property at \$1,950,000 based on an "as is" market value, without restrictions related to public housing. However, he emphasized the final sale price would depend on further negotiations with the city and potential usage restrictions.

A resolution to support the Section 18 disposition would be brought to the Board for a vote in the following month's meeting. Upon HUD approval—which could take several months—the Authority would begin the relocation process for the 24 affected families. The application would also include a request for tenant protection vouchers, allowing these residents to transition to Section 8 assistance.

Mr. Gusler noted residents had already been engaged in the process, with two tenant meetings held to inform and address concerns. Lisa Saunders, the property manager at Indian Rock Village, had also received direct feedback from residents. While concerns remained, many tenants expressed interest in receiving vouchers and relocating. Additionally, the Joint Resident Council had been previously briefed on the Authority's intent to submit the application.

Commissioner Carter expressed concern about relocating the families, particularly as the Authority had been counting on adding new units in a future development which has since been delayed. Mr. Gusler acknowledged the concern and mentioned a meeting was scheduled later that week to discuss next steps for the new development. He added the Authority would be eligible for

Demolition and Disposition Transitional Funding (DDTF) from HUD for five years as part of the disposition process.

Vice Chair Carr inquired about the timeline for the property transfer and the start of relocation. Mr. Gusler estimated relocation could begin as early as Spring 2026, with the goal of completing the sale by Spring 2027.

Chair Kepley asked whether the proceeds from the sale could be used to support the new development. Mr. Gusler confirmed both the sales proceeds and DDTF funds could be applied flexibly, though a specific plan for the use of those funds would be required as part of the application. The next application deadline for the Spanish Trail development was noted as March 2026.

Commissioner Walker asked about the bedroom distribution of the units. Mr. Gusler responded the units ranged from two to five bedrooms, with the larger units being harder to replace. While other public housing properties could accommodate large families, timing challenges meant relocation would take time and require flexibility.

Vice Chair Carr asked whether displaced residents would receive public housing preference. Mr. Gusler clarified they would not need to go on a waiting list and would be transferred directly.

In response to a question from Chair Kepley regarding flood history, Mr. Shank shared two of the buildings were reported to have flooded in 1985, although no incidents had occurred since then. Mr. Kepley and Mr. Shank discussed the impracticality and regulatory limitations of implementing flood control measures for the buildings. Mr. Shank emphasized the property's

geography made it impossible to flood-proof the structures.

Vice Chair Carr underscored the importance of public safety, citing recent flooding disasters across Texas, Southwest Virginia, and North Carolina as examples of why preemptive relocation was a responsible step.

Chair Kepley acknowledged the challenges of replacing the 24 units, especially given their size and cost—estimating modern construction costs at \$250,000 to \$300,000 per unit. Still, he recognized the proposed disposition appeared to be a practical and forward-looking solution.

Vice Chair Carr asked about other affordable housing developments. Mr. Gusler reported a nonprofit had partnered with the Rescue Mission on a project in the Belmont-Fallon target area. Although their initial 9% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit application had not scored high enough, the developer was proceeding with a 4% bond-financed project. Because the property was located in a qualified census tract, it benefited from bonus scoring.

Chair Kepley asked whether the Authority would have access to units in this new development. Mr. Gusler explained the developer had discussed the possibility of project-based vouchers, which the Authority would consider in the future. Timing issues had prevented earlier collaboration, and the Authority was currently in a shortfall position in its Housing Choice Voucher program. He also mentioned a separate affordable housing development approved in Roanoke County by the Lawson Company.

Commissioner Carter inquired about the current status of Section 8 landlord participation, noting past issues with landlords leaving the program due

to rent increases were not approved. Mr. Bustamante responded while the Authority lost some landlords, new ones were joining, and the overall pool remained healthy. No current tenants were in jeopardy of losing their vouchers.

Commissioner Carter then asked whether the relocation of Indian Rock Village tenants could begin before HUD approval. Mr. Bustamante explained tenant protection vouchers would not be allocated until HUD formally approved the Section 18 application, so early relocation was not feasible.

Chair Kepley summarized the next steps, confirming a resolution would be presented at the following month's meeting. Mr. Gusler affirmed this plan. Chair Kepley thanked Mr. Gusler for his presentation.

3. Committee Reports

Chair Kepley asked for committee reports. There were none.

4. Commissioner Comments

Chair Kepley asked for commissioner comments. Commissioner Carter expressed her pleasure that Indian Rock Village had received a new basketball court for the children and families there. Commissioner Walker congratulated Mr. Goodman on a successful news report promoting the new "It Takes A Village" initiative. Chair Kepley thanked them both for their comments.

5. City Council Liaison Comments or Discussion

Chair Kepley asked for comments or questions. There were none.

6. Residents or other community members to address the Board

Chair Kepley asked for further questions. There were none.

CONSENT AGENDA

- C-1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners held
Monday, June 23, 2025.

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

- C-2 Monthly Operations Report for the month of June 2025.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: File as submitted.

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

AYES: Commissioners Carter, Walker, and Wright, Chair Kepley and Vice Chair Carr

NAYS: None

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Resolution No. 4254

Mr. Gusler presented a resolution authorizing the sale of 1203 Melrose Avenue through the Authority's lease-purchase program. He explained the participant had been leasing the property for nearly two years, meeting the required duration to qualify for purchase. The lease-purchase model allows

participants to lease a home while improving their financial position, with the eventual goal of homeownership.

Mr. Gusler confirmed the applicant had complied with all program requirements and had secured financing. As part of the Authority's standard practice, at least 20% of the home's purchase price would be subsidized through a second note. The buyer was also working with Freedom First Credit Union and receiving down payment assistance from the Federal Home Loan Bank, a process the Authority regularly encourages. Although the official sales price was \$150,000, the buyer would be borrowing less than \$100,000 from the bank due to this layered assistance.

Vice Chair Carr asked whether the house was a newer build. Mr. Gusler responded the home was built in either 2005 or 2006 as part of the HOPE VI redevelopment efforts in the Lincoln Village area. That initiative had aimed to deconcentrate poverty and increase homeownership opportunities in the community.

He added the lease-purchase program had been in operation for some time and, currently, all properties in the program were either under contract or being renovated for current applicants. He acknowledged only one homeownership property remains available at the moment—1922 Melrose Avenue—which suffered a fire over the past weekend. He described the incident as a minor fire in terms of severity but noted the resulting damage was significant enough to displace the tenant.

Chair Kepley inquired about the employment verification process for the

program. Mr. Gusler explained the main requirements centered on consistent payments and financial qualifications handled by Freedom First Credit Union. The bank verified the participant's eligibility, ensuring the housing costs would not exceed 35% of their income.

With no further questions, Chair Kepley requested a motion for approval of the resolution.

Commissioner Carter moved for the adoption of Resolution No. 4254 as introduced.

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

AYES: Commissioners Carter, Walker, and Wright, Chair Kepley and Vice Chair Carr

NAYS: None

Chair Kepley thereupon declared said motion carried and Resolution No. 4254 was adopted as introduced.

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A SALES AGREEMENT WITH A BUYER AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A DEED OF CONVEYANCE INSTRUMENT FOR THE SALE OF 1203 MELROSE AVENUE, NW TO SASHA RALPH.

WHEREAS, the City of Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) operates a lease-purchase homeownership program and has funding available in the form of homeownership proceeds to further RRHA's goals of providing opportunities for low to moderate income residents to achieve homeownership; and

WHEREAS, the lease-purchase homeownership program was originally created in 2000 by RRHA upon approval of RRHA's HOPE VI - Lincoln 2000 project by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and

WHEREAS, the program has been amended several times including most recently by the RRHA Board of Commissioners' passing of Resolution Number 4083 on

May 24, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the existing tenants of these units at the time of the application's approval were notified that they would have the first right of refusal to purchase the housing unit they were currently leasing; and

WHEREAS, the previous tenant of this property was not interested or able to purchase this property and has since been relocated by RRHA to another public housing unit; and

WHEREAS, Sasha Ralph has complied with all requirements of the Lease-Purchase program to date and has provided evidence of financing with Freedom First Credit Union and made the required down payment on the mortgage in an escrow account; and

WHEREAS, Sasha Ralph has entered into a contract with RRHA to purchase the single-family property at 1203 Melrose Avenue, NW, bearing Tax Map No. 2222019, under the program for \$150,000; and

WHEREAS, prior to closing RRHA will account for at least 20% of the purchase price in the form of seller financing through a forgivable second mortgage; and

WHEREAS, RRHA desires to sell the property to the Purchaser.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Commissioners of the City of Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority that the Executive Director is hereby authorized and directed to execute documents necessary to consummate the sale of property at 1203 Melrose Avenue, NW, bearing City of Roanoke Tax Map Number 2222019, to Sasha Ralph for the purchase price of \$150,000 under the terms of the Lease-Purchase Homeownership Program.

2. Resolution No. 4255

Ms. Bousman presented a request for approval of a modification to Contract 900-2901-5 under the operations budget, specifically related to temporary employment services. She reminded the Board that in August 2021, they had approved the execution of two contracts—with Elwood Staffing and Evolution HR—not to exceed a combined total of \$541,990. These contracts were designed to provide temporary staffing support.

Ms. Bousman explained, in order to continue meeting staffing needs through the remainder of the contract term, the Authority needed to increase the contract amount by an additional \$49,270, bringing the new total to \$591,260.

Vice Chair Carr inquired about the types of workers being employed under the temporary services program. Ms. Bousman responded the greatest current need was within the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Department, where several specialists had recently left. While temporary workers had previously filled many maintenance positions, those roles were currently stable. The primary focus now was on hiring administrative support for the HCV program.

Chair Kepley clarified the reason for the requested increase was due to ongoing staffing losses. Ms. Bousman confirmed this, noting while the Authority continued external recruitment efforts—including Indeed postings, the internal website, and planned job fairs at the EnVision Center—there was an immediate need for additional temporary staff to maintain operations.

Commissioner Carter asked whether staff departures were tied to political instability or concerns about job security. Ms. Bousman stated recent departures were due to various reasons, including internal issues and more competitive job offers elsewhere. She noted one recent departure occurred just the previous Friday. She also emphasized the compensation study, once implemented, could help improve retention moving forward by increasing pay.

With no further questions, Chair Kepley called for a motion. Commissioner Walker introduced Resolution No. 4255 and moved its adoption as introduced.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wright and upon roll call the

following vote was recorded:

AYES: Commissioners Carter, Walker, and Wright, Chair Kepley and Vice Chair Carr

NAYS: None

Chair Kepley thereupon declared said motion carried and Resolution No. 4255 was adopted as introduced.

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY MODIFYING CONTRACT 900-2109-1-5 UNDER OPERATING FUNDS

WHEREAS, RRHA utilizes temporary employment agencies as a recruitment source for temp-to-hire or when meeting a performance measurement requires additional temporary staffing; and

WHEREAS, funding for these services is provided through the operating budgets of cost centers where the temporary staffing is utilized; and

WHEREAS, RRHA Board of Commissioners by Resolution 4091 authorized the execution of two (2) contracts for Temporary Employment Services with each contract having a not-to-exceed amount of \$541,990.00 and a four-year term beginning August 1, 2021 with a one-year option year period; and

WHEREAS, one (1) of the two (2) contracts was executed with Elwood Staffing Services, Inc., Contract 900-2109-1-5, and the other contract was executed with Evolution HR, Contract 900-2110-1-5; and

WHEREAS, due to changes in the labor market in recent years, RRHA staffing needs have resulted in a greater reliance on the services of the two (2) temporary employment agencies than what was expected when the contracts were executed; and

WHEREAS, in order to continue to meet RRHA staffing needs for the remaining 14 months of the contract period and the continued expected reliance on the two (2) temporary employment agencies to meet that need, the not-to-exceed amount of contract 900-2109-1-5 for Elwood Staffing Services, Inc. will need to be increased by the amount of \$49,270.00; and

WHEREAS, the Manager of Human Resources recommends the increase in the not-to-exceed amount for Contract 900-2109-1-5; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Director has determined that this contract modification complies with RRHA's Procurement Policy and that it is in the best interests of RRHA to

accept such change proposal and execute an appropriate contract modification; and

WHEREAS, RRHA's Procurement Policy states, "For all contracts of \$200,000 or more, any and all change orders, contract modifications, and/or amendments having a dollar value of \$25,000 or more must be submitted to the Board of Commissioners for review and approval prior to executing the contract modification."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Commissioners of the City of Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority that:

- (1) The recommended change proposal increasing the not-to-exceed amount for Contract 900-2109-1-5 by \$49,270.00 be and hereby is accepted;
- (2) The Executive Director be and hereby is authorized and directed to execute a contract modification, which by reference, is inclusive of the recommended change proposal for Contract 900-2109-1-5;
- (3) The Executive Director be and hereby is authorized to take such other actions as may be necessary to fulfill the intent of this Resolution.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Before concluding, Chair Kepley asked if there was any further business.

Commissioner Carter asked whether Congressman Ben Cline would be available to meet with the Board or if he would be present to speak during National Night Out. Mr. Bustamante stated he would follow up with the Congressman's assistant via email.

Commissioner Walker asked for clarification on the date of National Night Out, which was confirmed to be Tuesday, August 5th.

Vice Chair Carr then asked whether there was anything the Board could do to support budget advocacy efforts. Mr. Bustamante affirmed the importance of contacting congressional representatives and recommended visiting the NAHRO (National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials) website. He explained their advocacy page allowed users to enter their location, automatically generate a letter, and send it to the appropriate senators to urge full funding of housing programs.

Mr. Bustamante agreed to send out additional talking points for the Board's use.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Wright moved the meeting be adjourned.

The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Carr and upon roll call the following vote was recorded:

AYES: Commissioners Carter, Walker, and Wright, Chair Kepley and Vice Chair Carr

NAYS: None

Chair Kepley declared the meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.



Drew Kepley, Chair



David Bustamante, Secretary-Treasurer

Exhibits from June 23, 2025 Minutes previously circulated