

**Burlington Housing Authority
Minutes from the Regular Board of Commissioner Meeting
September 26, 2023**

Call to Order of Regular Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 9:02 a.m. on September 26, 2023, via Zoom and in person at 101 College Street, Burlington, Vermont by Board Chair Mike Knauer. The following commissioners were present: Jane Knodell, Cheryl Fatnassi, Bill Schrecker, and Tony Lewis. Also in attendance were Executive Director Steven Murray, Director of Asset Management Jeffrey Metcalf, Director of Human Resources Melissa Farnham, Director of Property Management Susan Carp, Director of Rental Assistance Stephanie Bixby, and CFO Nicholas Hibbard.

1. Changes to the Agenda

Mike Knauer added two topics to the Executive Session, a Personnel matter and Legal issue.

2. Forum: Resident of BHA Properties/General Public

French Brandon (Decker Towers), David Foss (Decker Towers), Catherine Foley, Bob Collins (Decker Towers), and Jim Raider (Citizen of Burlington) were in attendance. Lea Terhune, "Rainman", and "GHC" joined the meeting via Zoom.

Bob Collins gave a statement to the Board expressing concerns for resident safety regarding drug dealing and drug use at the building. He also noted the number of guests and unauthorized individuals who are coming and going from the Decker Towers property.

David Foss gave a statement to the Board regarding similar concerns to Bob Collins. He noted unauthorized persons sleeping in and camping around the Decker Towers building. There were additional concerns about the littering and smoking around the exterior, including adherence to the smoking policy.

Jim Raider gave a statement about his interactions with friends at Decker Towers. He is concerned about the quality of life and safety of the residents. He had similar concerns to the others related to drug activity, the sanitary nature of stairwells, and the controls on some of the common areas. He noted he felt a security person may be needed.

French Brandon shared the concerns of the other individuals. He told the Board about his recent experience with individuals who attacked him at the building. He shared his recent experiences with addiction and interactions in the building.

Cheryl Fatnassi wanted to acknowledge the concerns of those who spoke and our residents. She added that these were complicated issues and we are working with our community partners to do what we can to resolve the situation. She encouraged those present to continue bringing the issue to the forefront.

Lea Terhune commented on the installation of cameras and the use of private security. She felt it would take no time to install cameras and that BHA could use Chocolate Thunder to provide private security.

Mike Knauer echoed Cheryl Fatnassi's comments and noted the work done by staff and the work within the community.

3. Board Action

a. August 29, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes

Tony Lewis made a motion to approve the minutes, as presented. The motion was seconded by Bill Schrecker. There was unanimous approval of the motion.

4. Executive Director Report

There was a discussion about cameras at Decker Towers. Steven Murray gave updates on a lighting project at the property that will also help with unwanted activity at the building. He also addressed other security concerns and improvements, including recent evictions.

Steve gave an update on staff and industry thoughts about the effects of a government shutdown on our programs regarding the impending government shutdown if a budget is not passed. There is not likely to be an effect on the social security administration. Mike Knauer asked about lead time to put contingencies in place. Stephanie Bixby explained thoughts on how communication to landlords would work and timing given the late notice we would receive.

There was an update on a recent eviction that we believe will lead to a safer community for one of our properties. The unit will remain vacant for a period of time until it is safe to rent again for a new family. There will be a hold on court proceedings for the month of October as the judge and counsel are on vacation. We believe that as evictions proceed, at least seven drug related residents will be evicted.

Steve gave an update related to a recent RAB board meeting and his hopes to increase community building. This includes his commitment to an additional \$2,400 toward resident dinner gatherings.

There was discussion about the coming year snow removal. There was a discussion about security of packages at Decker Towers. There was a quick update on the status of rental assistance at 184 Church Street.

Mike Knauer reiterated the work BHA is doing in the community to help solve some of the current issues our residents and properties are facing.

5. Consent Agenda

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

Jane Knodell made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Tony Lewis seconded the motion.

Jeff Metcalf gave an update on issues related to lighting projects at Decker Towers and current work to make sure the interior lights are working properly. There will be several efficiencies with the coming update. Stephanie Bixby gave an update on the new regulations of contract rents at RAD properties from HUD. There was discussion of RAD rents. Cheryl Fatnassi was hoping that at a future meeting we can discuss the forecasting of the capital plan given the recent project costs.

There was unanimous approval of the motion.

6. Financial Report – July-August 2023

There was discussion about the Section 8 Admin fees, payment standards, and rent collections. Stephanie Bixby explained the payment standard increase BHA is looking to implement. There was a discussion about HAP fund utilization.

7. Executive Session – Employment Review, Personnel Issue, Legal Issue


At 10:01am, Cheryl Fatnassi made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss an employment review, personnel issues, and a legal matter. Steve Murray, Melissa Farnham, and Nick Hibbard were invited to attend. The motion was seconded by Jane Knodell. There was unanimous approval of the motion.

Melissa Farnham, Nick Hibbard, and Steve Murray left at different times from the session.

Jane Knodell made a motion to exit Executive Session at 11:15 a.m. The motion was seconded by Tony Lewis. There was unanimous approval of the motion.

8. Other Business

There being no other business, Jane Knodell moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m. Bill Schrecker seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

DocuSigned by:

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Secretary