

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
DANVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY HELD ON
AUGUST 27, 2020**

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority was held on Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 6 p.m. at the James Slade building, 135 Jones Crossing.

Those present were Constance Covington, Chairman; Amanda Oakes, Vice-Chairman; and Commissioners Vanessa Cain, Geary Davis, Alonzo Jones, Jermaine Parker, and Larry Toomer.

Also present were Mark Loftis, Counsel (via conference call); Larissa Deedrich, CEO/Executive Director; and Dennis Carter, Director of Accounting.

Chairman Covington called the meeting to order and the roll was noted.

There were no comments from the general public to be addressed.

Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, the July 1st Board meeting minutes, the financial report for July, Resolution 2664 approving amendments to the Authority's "Hours of Work and Payday Policy" to include a one-half hour unpaid meal break for part-time employees working six hours or more; Resolution 2665 approving a Mission Statement and Vision Statement for the Authority; and Resolution 2666 approving the Juneteenth holiday (held annually on June 19th) as an official holiday of the Authority. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cain and approved unanimously.

Mrs. Deedrich said the Housing Choice Voucher program is offering leasing incentives. Security deposits will be paid for applicants who sign leases within 60 days; the inability to get utility service and pay security deposits led to longer leasing periods in the past. The staff discussed eviction procedures for residents who don't comply with the new repayment policy. As an incentive, residents who pay their past due balances by September 10th and residents who pay their rent on time for six months will be given \$25 gift cards.

Mrs. Deedrich presented her report. Due to the rise in coronavirus cases, DRHA offices are closed to the public again. Clients will be seen in-person only if absolutely necessary. Amy Barts, Housing Voucher Voucher Technician, was selected to be the new HCV Director replacing Terry Ferguson, who will retire on August 28th. Shebra Waddell was hired for Ms. Barts' former position. No one was injured in an accidental fire at Ingram Heights recently.

The Board discussed their committee reports. The Human Resources Policies and Procedures committee met to discuss reviewing and revising policies (including the Vehicle Usage, Leave Time, and employee sign in/out policies), and having the Authority's counsel review them. They want to set up a system to review policies periodically, and review job descriptions and salaries. Fraud investigation was discussed.

The HUD Review committee will review comments made by HUD staff about the PHAS report. The Authority was rated as a “troubled” Authority. Mrs. Deedrich has appealed the PHAS score, but due to the coronavirus, HUD is not changing scores at this time. The tenant payment plan was discussed. Mr. Carter explained that when a tenant signs a payment agreement, the money owed is removed from accounts receivables and is not considered “current,” which helps improve the Authority’s score. HUD staff supported the recent maintenance reorganization and implementation of the tenant payment plan. The committee wants to see better management of staff and more staff accountability, and they want to improve policies and rent collection procedures. Mrs. Deedrich said funding should be used to refurbish the public housing units for better marketability.

Commissioner Davis gave the Development Committee report. He met with Commissioner Toomer and Mrs. Deedrich to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding between the Authority and the City for the purchase of properties for the City’s rehabilitation efforts. The committee wants to review the Land Bank agreement and amendments. They want to focus on projects that will give the Authority the maximum return for their time and investment. The Authority’s role in Bibleway Church’s apartment complex project and the advantages and disadvantages to the Authority were discussed. All the Commissioners felt it was important that each party completely understand what is required of them and what their limitations are. A letter explaining this will be sent to Bishop Lawrence Campbell of Bibleway Church and a follow-up meeting will be scheduled. Mrs. Deedrich said the Authority can only make money on larger projects.

Mrs. Deedrich distributed a Strategic Planning template to the Commissioners, and asked for their comments concerning the Authority’s goals, strengths, and weaknesses. She said quality control, consistency, and accountability are among the Authority’s weaknesses.

COVID funding is being spent on new vehicles, computers, furniture, carpet, software, and a new phone system. Some of the money will be spent on prizes for children who regularly attend the Danville Church Based Tutorial program. In response to a question asked by Commissioner Jones, Mrs. Deedrich said prizes could be awarded to children who have good attendance in virtual learning. Incentives are already in place for children participating in the tutorial program. Rita Claiborne is working with an Ingram Heights parent to obtain Internet service for his children to participate in online learning.

Chairman Covington is arranging 45 hours of community service for some youth as required by the court system. She called Marvin Martin, Jr. of Shining Diamonds to arrange some hours at a mentoring services company, and he agreed to donate equipment to furnish the fitness room at the Southside Community Learning Center now under construction on Chatham Avenue. He will also donate two retractable basketball goals.

The creation of a fraud investigation division was discussed. First Defense Security and Investigations submitted a bid that was too high for consideration, and Mrs. Deedrich said she didn't want to commit to a contract at this time. This will be tabled for future consideration.

The new Sherman Saunders Court apartment complex will be dedicated to former Mayor Sherman Saunders on Thursday, September 3rd, at 6 p.m. The old Head Start building at 608 Upper Street was renovated into ten apartments for veterans, the elderly/disabled, and lower-income residents. Commissioner (and Mayor) Jones will be among the guest speakers. In keeping with social distancing requirements, guests can tour the building on their own.

The Commissioners' terms of service were discussed. Commissioner Davis will leave the Board on October 31st after three terms of service. Commissioner Cain's first term ends October 31st, but she has asked to be reappointed. HUD mandates that a public housing or HCV program resident serve on the Board.

There will be no staff Christmas party this year due to coronavirus restrictions. In lieu of a party, the Board agreed to give all employees a \$150 gift card. Commissioner Jones made a motion for approval, which was seconded by Commissioner Toomer and approved unanimously.

(Resolution 2667)

All the Commissioners indicated they could attend the September 24th Board meeting to be held at 6 p.m. at the Slade building.

Regarding questions and comments from the Board, Commissioner Jones told Mrs. Deedrich that she had the Board's support, and he thanked her for all she had done during the short time she has served as CEO/Executive Director.

Commissioner Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Davis and approved unanimously.

Chairman

Secretary

