

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
DANVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY HELD ON  
JULY 22, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority was held on Thursday, July 22, 2021 at 5 p.m. at the James Slade building, 135 Jones Crossing.

Those present were Vice-Chairman Amanda Oakes and Commissioners Faye Brown, Vanessa Cain, Alonzo Jones, and Larry Toomer. Commissioner Jermaine Parker was unable to attend the meeting.

Also present were Mark Loftis, Counsel; Larissa Deedrich, CEO/Executive Director; and Katya Urraco, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Director.

Vice-Chairman Oakes called the meeting to order and the roll was noted.

Constance Covington, Chairman, submitted her resignation effective July 21, 2021. In accordance with the DRHA's by-laws, Vice-Chairman Oakes will become the new Chairman. A new Vice-Chairman will be appointed at a later meeting.

Commissioner Jones made a motion to amend the agenda to include a discussion concerning public comments later in the meeting; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Cain and approved unanimously.

Commissioner Toomer made a motion to approve the May 27<sup>th</sup> Board meeting minutes; the minutes were seconded by Commissioner Jones and approved unanimously.

The Commissioners discussed the adoption of a cannabis use policy. Mrs. Deedrich recommended adopting a policy that allowed consideration of cannabis use on a case-by-case basis. Any resident who creates a disturbance as a result of their cannabis use would be subject to eviction. Mr. Loftis said any policy the Board approves could be revised at any time pending proper notification to the residents, and he stressed the importance of enforcing the policy uniformly. Federal funding will not be jeopardized regardless of the policy adopted. Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the cannabis policy for applicants and the cannabis policy for residents as presented; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Toomer and approved unanimously. (Resolution 2684)

Commissioner Toomer made a motion to approve Resolution 2685 approving the designation of a Board of Directors consisting of five Commissioners for the Dan River District Development Council; and, to appoint Amanda Oakes as President, Vanessa Cain as Vice-President, and Larry Toomer as Secretary/Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cain and approved unanimously.

Commissioner Jones made a motion to table consideration of the submission of a RAD application for Cardinal Village, Cedar Terrace, Ingram Heights, and Pleasant View. Commissioner Toomer seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Mrs. Deedrich said submitting an application would put the DRHA on a HUD waiting list and would allow time to weigh the good and bad points of the conversion to determine how it would affect the residents.

Katya Urraco discussed the financial report. Financially, the Authority is doing well and Ms. Urraco expects the Authority will end the fiscal year in good standing. A new software system will be implemented in the coming months and the financial reports will be done in a different format. All public housing sites will be able to make remote deposits, and the DRHA's accounts will have better protection against fraud. By the end of the year, work orders, check requests, purchase orders, etc. will all be generated on the computer, and this will make preparation for audits easier and more efficient. The staff is working on projects to expend remaining grant funding. A Nan McKay consultant is conducting financial training for Mrs. Deedrich and Ms. Urraco.

Virginia Housing will pay delinquent rent balances for public housing and Section 8 residents. A signed form stating that the resident's past due rent was due to COVID is all that is required. Deborah Morton and other staff will visit the residents to explain the application process. The Commissioners discussed issues such as the residents' distrust and lack of understanding that can affect communication with the DRHA's staff and encourage non-compliance with rules and regulations.

Regarding the HCV program report, Mrs. Deedrich said the program's PIC score has gone down. She believes this is due to a problem with HUD's computer system. This will not affect funding for the program. There was no discussion concerning the public housing reports.

Mrs. Deedrich said former tenants owe the Authority about \$35,000 and these debts have been turned over to Piedmont Collections. She gave an update on the Authority's COVID policy. All offices are open to the public and appointments are being scheduled on an as-needed basis. Employees and residents must wear masks during appointments. Tenants are urged to submit required documentation via email or fax, or by leaving it in the outside drop boxes. The DRHA and Danville Community College may work together on a program to address the educational needs of residents and other low income individuals. Mrs. Deedrich discussed the Kinetic Potential program, which is a partnership between the Danville Church Based Tutorial Program and the Danville Public Schools. The program, which focuses on providing educational assistance for adults, may use the DRHA's facilities and rent an office at the Southside Community Learning Center. The DRHA will provide transportation and other assistance. The approval of a developer partner for the RAD program will be considered at the September meeting. Mrs. Deedrich and Ms. Urraco are working with American National Bank staff to set up a paperless banking system; the new system will first be used on a trial basis in Section 8 and will eventually be implemented in public housing. Debit and credit cards can be used for rent payments, and payments can be drafted from TANF accounts and Social Security checks. All bank fees will be paid by the Authority.

An Employee Appreciation Day will be held on Thursday, August 5<sup>th</sup> for the staff and their families. The staff will attend an Otterbots game at Dan Daniel Park and a buffet will be served.

The Human Resources committee met and discussed the cannabis policy, a leave time buyback policy, recruitment for an Assistant Rental Property Manager job vacancy, and the addition of one Section 8 staff position. Commissioners' training was also discussed. The committee discussed negative comments made by former employees and the need to follow policies regarding terminations. Commissioner Jones said the Board needs to know when employees are hired. As recommended by Counsel, Vice-Chairman Oakes said Mrs. Deedrich could send emails to the Board regarding personnel matters as long as there was no discussion on these issues.

The HUD Review committee did not meet. Commissioner Parker was appointed to replace Chairman Covington as a committee member.

The receipt of \$100,000 in funding from the City of Danville will enable the DRHA to retain some employees and rehire Deborah Morton to work with the residents. It will enable the Authority to pursue more ROSS grants. The ROSS grant program is open for applications again, and Mrs. Deedrich is working with Ron Collier, the Authority's grant writer, to submit applications. The Authority will have to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the City stipulating that the City will oversee the expenditure of the \$100,000 grant.

There was no old business for discussion.

All the Commissioners indicated they could attend the August 26<sup>th</sup> Board meeting to be held at 5 p.m. at the Slade building. The Commissioners welcomed Ms. Urraco to the Authority.

There were no public comments for discussion.

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

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Chairman

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Secretary