

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
DANVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY HELD ON  
OCTOBER 22, 2020**

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority was held on Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 5 p.m. at the James Slade building, 135 Jones Crossing.

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

Also attending the meeting were Mark Loftis, Counsel; 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 matters presented by the general public.

Commissioner Jones made a motion to approve the agenda, the September 24<sup>th</sup> Board meeting minutes, and the purchase of gift cards for 15 DRHA volunteers who provide services for the residents; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Parker and approved unanimously. Commissioner Jones made a motion to purchase \$50 gift cards for the volunteers. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cain and approved unanimously. (Resolution 2672)

There was no discussion concerning the public housing reports, Housing Choice Voucher report, or financial report.

Mrs. Deedrich presented her report. DRHA offices are still closed to the public. Appointments can be scheduled, if necessary. The maintenance staff is working on backlogged work orders; residents must wear masks and stay in another room while work is done in their units. The mobile work order system has been implemented, and the staff has been trained in its use. Old work orders from 2014 have been closed out. Patice Holland, an attorney with Woods Rogers, conducted online training on the CDC eviction moratorium for the public housing and HCV staffs. Mrs. Deedrich and Sharon Adams, Public Housing Manager, are working on a plan for residents who are not paying rent and are in severe default. The employees were delighted with their unexpected bonuses. The Authority's contract with First Defense Security and Investigations of Lynchburg was cancelled; the Danville Police Department will begin providing security services on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

Committee reports were discussed. The Human Resources committee met with Mrs. Deedrich on October 21<sup>st</sup>. Staff compensation and the security contract with the Danville Police Department were discussed. A salary study was done recently, but it did not compare the Authority's salaries with those of other housing authorities, so another study will be done.

The HUD Review committee was unable to meet, but calls with HUD regarding the Authority's designation as a troubled authority are continuing. Mrs. Deedrich requested a change in the Authority's PHAS score, but has not received an answer. The HUD staff is happy with the improvement in collections and with maintenance changes implemented in recent months. Mrs.

Deedrich is working with City of Danville staff to help residents pay overdue balances. The HUD Review committee plans to meet every other month.

The Development committee did not meet, but it will begin focusing on ways to upgrade the public housing sites to make them more marketable. Mrs. Deedrich got estimates from some agencies to assess the Authority's sites and make recommendations for improvements, but their costs were too high. Jeff Bond, architect with Solex Architecture, will walk through the sites and make recommendations. Mrs. Deedrich wants to hire a consultant to determine if blended occupancy or converting units to Section 8 housing would be advisable. She received information from HD Advisors concerning the Bibleway Church apartment project, and discussed it with Earl Reynolds, Deputy City Manager. Mrs. Deedrich and Mr. Reynolds will meet with Bishop Lawrence Campbell of Bibleway to discuss the feasibility of the project.

The Strategic Planning committee did not meet, but the Strategic Plan should be finalized and ready for the Board's approval in November. The DRHA staff is making recommendations for the plan.

Regarding old business, a \$500,000 grant from the Danville Regional Foundation will be used to offset construction costs and purchase a portable stage, speakers, and other items for the new Southside Learning Center at Cardinal Village. Some office space in the new building will be available for rental, and Mrs. Deedrich estimated rent of up to \$960 per month could be charged (including utilities, phone, and internet service). All Sherman Saunders Court units are ready for occupancy, but the building must pass an EarthCraft inspection before new tenants can move in. The complex has failed two inspections, but the contractors have now learned what is needed for approval. The next inspection is scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup>.

The first draft of the 2021 operating budget was sent to the Board for their review and comments. In developing the budget, Mr. Carter used the prior year's actual HUD funding, which could be higher or lower in 2021. The budget includes a 3% cost of living increase for employees, a 3% increase in utilities in the event of a bad winter, and a 3% increase for insurance, office supplies, materials, and other miscellaneous categories. All current programs and staff positions were budgeted for 2021. Employee benefits remain the same. Mr. Carter hopes the Authority will save approximately 30% to 50% of the current costs for security by contracting with the Danville Police Department for these services. The budget draft will be revised, and the final budget will be ready for Board approval in November.

The November Board meeting was rescheduled for Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup> because of the Thanksgiving holiday on November 26<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will be at 5 p.m. at the James Slade building.

The Board had no questions or comments.

Faye Brown was chosen to serve as the next Commissioner. She will replace Commissioner Davis, whose last term ends on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Vice-Chairman Oakes moved that the meeting of the Board of Commissioners be recessed and that the Board immediately reconvene in executive closed session for the sole purpose of consultation with legal counsel retained by the DRHA pertaining to actual or probable litigation, and regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel

relating to an incident occurring at a property held by the DRHA under the terms of its agreement(s) with the City of Danville and a notice of claim received relating to such incident, which discussion is exempt under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) and (8). Commissioner Jones seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Vice-Chairman Oakes made the following motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Jones and approved unanimously: BE IT RESOLVED that during the immediately preceding closed meeting, to the best of the Commissioners' knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and (ii) only such public business as was identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was reconvened were heard, discussed, or considered.

Vice-Chairman Oakes made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Parker and approved unanimously.

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Chairman

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Secretary