

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC
February 21, 2019

The Board of Commissioners of The Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, SC convened on Thursday, February 21, 2019 at 4:33 p.m. in the CHA Board Room.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order and upon roll call, those present and absent for the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia were as follows:

PRESENT: Bobby D. Gist, Chairperson
Ernest Cromartie, III, Commissioner
Alexena Furgess, Commissioner
George Green, Commissioner
Selena Pickens, Commissioner
Gilbert Walker, Executive Director
Ed Eubanks, Legal Counsel

STAFF: Howard Thomas, Melanie Baker, Donna Gilbert, Ramonda Pollard, Lee McRoberts, Cindy Godbey, Cynthia Hardy

VISITORS: Bob Coble, Ed McDowell, members of the public, members of the media

Mr. Gist called the meeting to order at 4:33 pm and Mr. Green opened with a prayer.

Ms. Pickens stated the January 17, 2019 minutes should be amended to reflect Mrs. Rubin attended via phone and that Mrs. Furgess joined the meeting at 5:25 p.m. Upon motion of Mr. Cromatie, seconded by Mr. Green the minutes of the January 17, 2019 meeting (as amended), the minutes of the special called meeting held January 31, 2019 and the minutes of the special called meeting held February 6, 2019 were unanimously approved.

Mr. Walker gave the Bills and Communications report. All bills are current and being addressed in a timely manner. Mr. Cromartie asked if the Authority is current on all of the hotels currently housing displaced Allen Benedict Court residents; Mr. Walker said that all that have been presented to him have been paid. A full relocation report will be given later in the meeting.

Mr. Walker gave the Secretary Treasurer's report. The 87 unit complex at Lorick Place is under construction and should be ready for occupancy by the end of the year; all of the units will have project based voucher assistance and will consist of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units. Tenants will be eligible for case management services as residents of this property. This property is located on the site formerly known as West Ave., the units previously on the site were demolished.

Mr. Walker gave a report on Gonzales Gardens. Eight single family homes are currently under construction on McDuffie St. Several of the homes are presold and staff anticipates the rest to sell quickly. Staff is currently working to put gap financing in place to begin construction of the Senior and other affordable units on the site. Work should begin soon to restore the existing Community Center; plans are in place to make the Center look like it did after original

construction and to make it a museum and historical archive documenting the history of the community. Mr. Walker said that the completed Gonzales Gardens site will be similar to the Rosewood Hills neighborhood.

Mr. Walker said that there are no Committees Reports for the previous period.

Mr. Walker gave an update on the relocation of displaced residents from Allen Benedict Court. To date; 104 families have identified permanent housing, 53 of those families are waiting for their units to be inspected and 53 have moved into either public housing or section 8 properties. A post office shuttle has been set up to get residents to the post office to collect their mail, cash and restaurant gift cards have been provided to help with expenses and to assist with food costs, transportation is being provided as needed to help residents accomplish their daily tasks.

Mr. Walker said that a CHA staff person has been assigned to each hotel to act as a liaison for the residents and to communicate any immediate needs they may have to the appropriate personnel. Mr. Cromartie asked what schedule the CHA representatives are working in the hotels; Mr. Walker said that a staff person is scheduled at the hotels from 7am until 8 pm. Mr. Walker stated that staff will be trying to consolidate residents to fewer hotel locations during the next month as people begin to move into permanent housing. Staff is working with residents every day to identify permanent housing but inventory is low in the area and finding 1 bedroom units in particular has been challenging.

Mr. Cromartie asked what the Authority is doing to work with the school district to ensure the educational needs of the children are being met. Mr. Walker said that all children are being transported to and from their home schools with a combined effort from the Authority and the transportation department of Richland School District One. Children are also being kept at the Tillis Center in the afternoons after school to provide day care while their parents are at work.

Mrs. Furgess asked if the Save A Lot had been reopened. Mr. Walker stated that it is being run by CHAD until another operator is located. Mrs. Furgess asked if staff inspected units for Section 8 vouchers at Mallard Point. Mr. Walker said that some of those units are in the mod rehab program and would be subject to an annual inspection. Mrs. Pollard said that some of the units had failed to meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and had been put into abatement, a situation that occurs when payments from the Authority are stopped because of a failure to meet HQS, the landlord is given time to correct the deficiencies before abatement occurs.

Mr. Thomas gave the operations report for Public Housing. There were 22 police reports for the previous month; 9 reports involved residents, 13 involved non-residents.

Mr. Thomas requested approval to award a contract to the Wright Group for the replacement of vinyl siding at Hammond Village. There were 5 responses to the bid request and the Wright Group was the apparent low bidder with a bid of \$108,000. Staff has worked with this contractor in the past and has verified their references and good standing. Upon motion of Ms. Pickens, seconded by Mr. Green it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Thomas requested approval to award a contract to Crescent Construction for the replacement of all roofs at Hammond Village. There were 8 responses to this bid request and Crescent Construction was the apparent low bidder with a bid of \$132,000. Mr. Cromartie asked if there was a reason for the range of prices in the bid submitted, Mr. Thomas said that all bidders received the same information and scope of work. Upon motion of Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Pickens it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Thomas requested approval to award a contract to RDF Construction for the renovation of kitchens and baths at Fountain Lake Court. There were 4 responses to this request for bids and RDF Construction was the apparent low bidder with a bid of \$282,000. Mr. Thomas said the units had been built in 1980 and this renovation would totally upgrade the kitchens and baths with new appliances, cabinets and related fixtures. The renovations will not require the tenants to be relocated and units will be left in usable condition at the end of each day. Mr. Walker said that Fountain Lake Court is 1 of 4 scattered site communities built in the early 1980's around the City. Ms. Pickens asked where the projects are being paid for in the budget, Mr. Walker stated that this work is all being paid for out of Capital Funds. Upon motion of Mr. Green, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Walker acknowledged Councilman McDowell and thanked him for his ongoing support of the grocery store.

Mrs. Pollard gave the Operations Report for the Housing Choice Voucher program. 382 Veteran's Assisted Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers are leased up and another 50 clients searching for units. Most participants in this program need 1 or 2 bedroom units which are in short supply in the City and County. A landlord forum is being planned for the spring to encourage new participants in the program and to try and increase the inventory of available units. The forum is designed to encourage feedback from existing landlords and to make information available to potential landlords, this event is hosted in partnership with the United Way. Ms. Pickens asked Mrs. Pollard to explain the difference between public housing and section 8. Mrs. Pollard said that the the Section 8 program pays a portion of a tenant's rent for privately owned and managed housing; public housing is owned and managed directly by the CHA. Approximately \$2.2 million is paid out to local landlords on a monthly basis on behalf of Section 8 program participants.

At 5:31 p.m. Mr. Cromartie motioned that the Board enter Executive Session to discuss legal and personnel issues, seconded by Mrs. Furgess it was unanimously approved.

At 8:11 p.m. Upon motion of Mr. Cromartie and seconded by Mrs. Furgess it was unanimously decided to resume Regular Session.

Attorney Coble stated that the Board had accepted Mr. Walker's request to retire and that his letter of resignation would be made available to the press following the meeting. Mr. Walker will stay on until June 30, 2019 and will work to make the transition smooth. Mr. Coble made the following motion on behalf of the Board; The CHA Board will consult with new members being appointed by City Council on the appointment and selection of an Acting Executive

Director and direct legal counsel to draft a transition schedule. Supported by Ms. Pickens and seconded by Mrs. Furgess it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Cromartie stated that as part of the transition he proposed the following:

- 1 – Board directs the Executive Director to evaluate and completely restructure the organizational structure of the Authority.
- 2 – Board directs the creation of 2 new Officers/Executive Positions that will provide an annual report, in conjunction with legal counsel, directly to the Board:
 - a. Health and Human Safety Officer
 - b. Quality Control Officer as it relates to maintenance
- 3 - Direct the Officer of Health and Human Safety, in conjunction with legal counsel, to make annual report to Board on both local and federal legal updates and building code updates
- 4 – Complete evaluation of the hiring, training and retention of CHA maintenance personnel
- 5 – Establish self evaluation process
- 6 – Cooperate and collaborate with CPD and CFD and issue a letter to City Council requesting that all communication from either CPD or CFD be provided to CHA as soon as possible so we are aware of their presence and findings so that we may be more proactive than reactive

Seconded by Ms. Pickens the motions were unanimously approved.

There being no further business Mr. Cromartie motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Pickens it was unanimously decided to end the meeting at 8:17 pm.

Secretary

APPROVED: _____