



**ROCKFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**October Special Meeting
Minutes**

Thursday October 3, 2024

Present: Jeff DiBenedetto, Chairman **Staff:** Tim Horning, RHA Legal Counsel
Anisha Grimmett, Vice Chair Angel Mackey, Executive Assistant
Jaime Sanchez, Commissioner
Simone Cameron, Commissioner

Absent: Laura Snyder, CEO
Odessa Walker, COO
Jennifer Matlick, Human Services Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 pm

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

No one attendance

BOARD DISCUSSION

Development and Future Planning

The board underscored the critical need for RHA to adopt a forward-looking approach to development, leveraging successful models from other housing authorities across the country. A key takeaway from conferences attended by board members is the importance of RHA positioning itself for future growth and sustainability. Discussions focused on establishing stronger partnerships with the city of Rockford and external developers to facilitate RHA's growth.

The board emphasized that the CEO should focus on long-term planning and vision, moving beyond day-to-day operational matters. It was recommended that the CEO engage more proactively with housing authorities that have successfully become self-sufficient through strategic development initiatives. The goal is for RHA to shift towards creating a sustainable model where it can operate independently of external funding, similar to other authorities across the country.

Jane Addams and Other Redevelopments

Specific attention was given to redevelopment opportunities, including the recapture of properties such as Jane Addams and Orton Keys. The board acknowledged that these properties present significant potential for future redevelopment and emphasized the importance of having a clear strategy for bringing them back under RHA's control. These projects are seen as cornerstones of RHA's broader development initiatives.

Collaboration and Networking

The board highlighted the value of collaboration with other housing authorities, particularly in the area of development strategy. They discussed how networking at conferences allows for the exchange of insights and best practices. The board encouraged more involvement in these professional gatherings to build relationships with other authorities that have successfully navigated similar challenges and to gain exposure to innovative development approaches.

Organizational Structure

The board raised concerns about the current vacancies in several key high-level positions within RHA. Specifically, the HR Manager, Maintenance Manager, Affordable Housing Manager, and LIPH Manager roles remain unfilled. The board stressed the importance of filling these positions promptly to ensure operational stability and effectiveness. They requested updates on the hiring timeline for these roles, as the current vacancies pose challenges to maintaining smooth operations across the organization.

Property Tours and Onboarding

The board discussed the importance of giving commissioners a comprehensive understanding of RHA's portfolio. To achieve this, they plan to conduct tours of all RHA properties, a process they would like formalized into the onboarding of new commissioners. Additionally, the board requested that all LIPH, Scattered Sites, Bridge properties, and RHA properties managed by Gorman be pinned on Google Maps. This visual tool will provide commissioners with a clear overview of RHA's geographic footprint and help new members quickly familiarize themselves with the organization's assets.

Development and Staffing Reports

Laura Snyder, the CEO, will now be providing the board with monthly reports on development progress. This new reporting structure is intended to keep the board informed of ongoing projects, future plans, and any challenges encountered in development efforts. Additionally, Laura will provide an update on the staffing situation

during the October meeting, which is of particular concern given the current vacancies in key roles.

CEO Evaluation Preparation

Tim Horning has been tasked with providing the necessary documentation to the board to assist them in preparing for the CEO's 2025 evaluation. These documents will help the board establish clear criteria and expectations for the evaluation, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of the CEO's performance in leading RHA towards its development and operational goals.

At 2:37pm Vice Chair Grimmiett made a motion to go into closed session. Commissioner Sanchez seconded the motion.

Ayes: Commissioners: Grimmiett, Sanchez, Cameron, DiBenedetto

Nays: None

MOTION PREVAILED

At 2:43pm Commissioner Sanchez made a motion to come out of closed session. Commissioner Cameron seconded the motion.

Ayes: Commissioners: Sanchez, Cameron, Grimmiett, DiBenedetto

Nays: None

MOTION PREVAILED

At 2:44pm, with no further business, Commissioner Sanchez made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chair Grimmiett seconded the motion.

Ayes: Commissioners: Grimmiett, Sanchez, Cameron, DiBenedetto

Nays: None

MOTION PREVAILED

Chairman, Jeff DiBenedetto

Board Secretary, Laura Snyder