

BATTLE CREEK HOUSING COMMISSION
MINUTES
Regular Meeting March 25, 2025

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Battle Creek Housing Commission (BCHC) was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by President Simmons in the Main Office of Kellogg Manor, 250 Champion Street, Battle Creek Michigan.

ROLL CALL:

Present:	Commissioner Simmons, President
	Commissioner Gray
	Commissioner Guzzo
Excused:	Commissioner Gillette, Vice President

Also present: Lee Talmage, Executive Director; John Paternoster, Deputy Director; Abe Alassaf, Deputy Director; Ryan Wilson, UPHoldings Inc (Virtual), Elay Gabay & Kalina Foster, Tiyanne Payne, US Dept of Veterans Affairs.

BUSINESS:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES

A motion was then made by Commissioner Gray and supported by Commissioner Guzzo to approve the Minutes of the February 25, 2025 Regular Meeting as presented, and the Meeting Agenda.

Vote: Ayes- Unanimous
Nays- None

PUBLIC COMMENT & SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:

President Simmons then recognized Ryan Wilson of UPHoldings Inc (UPH), joining the meeting by electronic technology. Wilson reviewed with the Commission the upcoming April 1, 2025 MSHDA LIHTC Grant submission and the proposed changes to the commitment and Memorandum between BCHC and UPH. UPH has been meeting with MSHDA to explore how the project's competitiveness for the LIHTC grant could be improved. Talmage added that after the February 25, 2025 Commission meeting, BCHC staff met with Wilson on March 19, 2025 to discuss these changes to better understand the MSHDA recommendations, particularly incorporating Tenant Based Vouchers into the PBV project and Co-ownership.

Two primary changes have been suggested: a blend of HCV PBV and HCV TBV units in the development. The other is positioning BCHC as a 25% Emerging Developer/Co-Owner. By acquiring a Co-owner already committed to the project, and able to bring additional financial support to the deal, the project would be in a stronger position to increase its score with MSHDA and move forward with the LIHTC Award.

Wilson stated there would probably need to be an additional \$2 Million to make this development project possible. The Commission then discussed utilizing other local resources like low interest loans, philanthropy, Federal Home Loan Bank, etc. BCHC and UPH will continue to explore the options available for obtaining the needed finances and confirm BCHC will qualify as a Co-Owner based on the MSHDA QAP criteria.

The Commission then welcomed Eli Gabay and Kalima Foster to discuss the March 2024 commitment made by BCHC to enter into a 2-3 year PBV Contract with True Care Living (TCL). Gabay updated the board on his efforts to improve the financial position of TCL. Gabay let the Board know he has one year to reverse the financial position of TCL and the PBV program is key to being able to preserve critical housing and services utilized by the individuals that live at TCL. Gabay also reported that he had engaged **Garret McDaniel of Taft Law in Washington DC to assist TCL.**

Talmage then stated the Housing Commission remains committed to its original decision to pursue PBV rental assistance for TCL. But there have been challenges from the beginning. The first challenge was obtaining technical assistance to launch a first time PBV contract for an unusual preexisting development, with an inexperienced Developer. But more critical, beginning June 2024 all PHAs administering HCV funding were notified to immediately stop spending HCV funding assistance. The entire Section 8 program was on hold and PHAs were being warned about sliding into “Shortfall” if they were not all ready there.

In 2023-2024 BCHC was meeting regularly with the Detroit Field Office and being directed with utilizing (leasing up vouchers) as much of their HCV assistance as the possibly could. By July 2024 the Commission was directed to immediately stop issuing HCV Vouchers and to not conduct Orientations with the exception of VASH vouchers.

This brought up the possibility of using VASH vouchers for Veterans that are currently living at True Care Living. President Simmons then invited VA Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Supervisor Tiyanne Payne to join the group. Payne asked questions about the units and services and stated she would be willing to work with the VA Caseworkers, BCHC, and TCL, to see where VASH could work but there is a lack of clarity in understanding how the services are paid for and provided.

After the discussion, the Commission charged Talmage with preparing a response to True Care Living about the Commission’s financial position and that the staff needs to be ready to respond immediately when the funding becomes available starting with a HAP contract.

Directors Report & Financials:

The Directors Report including Bills and Communications, are presented, attached, and made a part of these minutes.

Director Talmage reviewed with the Commission the status of the RAD Conversion and the recapture of the suspended 2023 and 2024 Capital Fund Programs. The correction to

the Turnkey III program had been completed and HUD recaptured \$7,028.00 from the two grants leaving \$1,841.147 for the RAD Conversion.

Talmage then followed up on the presentation/discussion from the February 2024 regular meeting about applying for a LIHTC 4% Rehabilitation grant. He shared a conversation BCHC staff had with Jerry Anderson on March 20, 2025 about how these grants could work for us. This meeting made a clear impression that BCHC should pursue this option. Talmage suggested the Commission have a special workshop with Jerry Anderson and offered to set that up as soon as possible. The Commission agreed.

Talmage then added to his Report:

- A brief overview of the NAHRO Legislative Conference in Washington DC. President Simmons approved Talmage speaking with NAHRO Professional Development about the logistics of hosting a new Commissioner Development Training Class with Jim Inglis. This new class builds on the Fundamentals/Ethics training that the board had previously taken.
- The Community Contribution Reports from the BC Diaper Initiative, the Calhoun County Homeless Coalition, and the NAACP/Neighborhoods Inc.
- The upcoming independent Audit for FYE 09/30/2024 in the office the week of April 7-11, 2025.
- The repair work of the damaged exterior brick and entry way to the 380 Truth Drive Community Building is now 80% complete. The Contractor is First Contracting, Ovid Michigan.

Deputy Directors Reports:

The Deputy Directors Reports on occupancy and Pest Control were presented, are attached and made a part of these minutes. Paternoster reported that a new family was able to purchase their Turnkey III Home at the end of February.

The Deputy Directors Report on development was presented, is attached and made a part of these minutes. Deputy Director Abe Alassaf provided a Trash Service Cost Analysis between Republic and Waste Management of the contracted monthly and annual costs for all BCHC sights. The new contract represents a significant savings. Alassaf also updated the Commission on new IT Enhancements implementing new computers and an update in the Microsoft Office Suite. Alassaf also provided a list of community Leaders he had made contact with since beginning in February and new and ongoing Development Opportunities.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:**Resolution 2025-04 2nd Qtr Collection Loss Write Off**

A motion was made by Commissioner Guzzo and supported by Commissioner Gray to adopt Collection 2025-04 as prepared.

Vote: Ayes- Unanimous
Nays- None

OTHER BUSINESS:

Public Comments: None

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Gray announced the Community Juneteenth Celebration on June 14th ~~20th~~ & 15th ~~21st~~, 2025 at Claude Evans Park.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 5:56 President Simmons adjourned the meeting. The next regular meeting of the Commission will be Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee Talmage
Secretary

