



## Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust (BJHT) Board Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2024

### **Attendance In Person**

Board Members: Caitlin Reid, Carmen Washington, Christian Kata, Dick Stewart, Ethan James, Jan Maliowski, Matt Davis, Matt Garnes and Wendy Zara  
Staff: Dana Totman and Jennifer Tuckwiller

### **Attendance Virtually**

Board Members: Ashley Feaster, Courtney Hampson, Michelle Gaston and Victoria Smalls

### **Call to Order**

Chair Dick Stewart welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:00am. Dick S. took the opportunity to welcome all of the new Board members in attendance at today's meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the Board meetings on February 26, 2024, were presented for approval. A motion was made by Wendy Z. and a second by Caitlin R. to approve the minutes. The motion was approved unanimously. The special meeting minutes from March 8, 2024, were also presented for approval. A motion was made by Wendy Z. and a second by Caitlin R. to approve the minutes. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

### **Financial Report**

Dana reviewed the financial management reports in lieu of Michelle G. because of technical difficulties with sound. Revenues are comprised of the 8 local governments' contributions and a \$3 million state appropriation. On the expenditure side, note that this is a 18 month budget due to change in the fiscal year. One major expenditure is the administrative fee to Community Works. Then a \$500,000 payment to Community Works for the Carrington Manor project, for a 64-unit development for Seniors. This is actually a loan and will have the opportunity for repayment, but BJHT won't see those payments until year 7 and on to year 15. The loans will be audited yearly and monitored for repayment by another party. The third area is for actual operations here at the office: personnel costs, office supplies, etc. Revenues also include invoices to the local governments that will be distributed to the local governments for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Matt G.

made a motion to accept the report as submitted, second by Wendy Z. The financial report was approved by a unanimous vote.

### **Nominating Committee Report**

Matt G. reported that the committee met several times over the last several months and extended several invitations to potential new Board members. The only outstanding people from the committee's work are Roger Bright and Allison Coppage. In conclusion, everyone that was extended an invitation to join the Board has accepted and there are 2 individuals to follow up with.

### **Executive Director Search Committee Report**

Matt Davis reported that 3 individuals had been interviewed for the position and ultimately 2 of those candidates were brought in for in-person interviews. After those meetings, it was decided that the Board would make an offer to Claude Hicks. He currently resides in Pennsylvania and has been in the affordable housing field for a long time. Claude accepted the position last Friday afternoon and plans to begin work on April 1, 2024 pending no surprises in the background check or references. Matt D. is performing the background check and Dick S. is following up on the references.

### **RFP Update**

Interim Executive Director Dana Totman explained the 3 program areas for the Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust (BJHT). BJHT decided to focus expenditures on three areas: create rental homes, help existing home repair programs and finally fund organizations to help people buy their first homes. The bulk of our funding goes toward developing rental housing. We received 3 responses. One proposal creates 16 affordable rental homes in Burton. The second proposal would create 4 rental homes in Bluffton. And the final proposal would create 80 affordable rental units in Hardeeville. The collective total of approximately \$600,000 is less than what BJHT was making available. The other 2 RFP's are still active and applications will be accepted until March 28<sup>th</sup>. We have received 3 applications for the homebuyer RFP and 2 for the home repair program so far. BJHT expects to release 2 more RFP's - fall 2024 and spring 2025. BJHT expects to release another round of Homebuyer and Home Repair RFP's in fall 2024. Dana also explained that our rental home development funding will "stack" with state tax credits that may be available to developers. There are far more projects than funding throughout the State and the Lowcountry (Beaufort/Jasper) sees far less awards than other parts of the State. These funds are extremely competitive and based on a points system. One way our local developers can get more points is through leveraging local funding through organizations like BJHT. The State Home Repair program is less defined and have a few chosen providers scattered throughout the State. The State homeownership program provides approximately 1700 loans to first time homeowners (or someone who hasn't owned a home in 3 years). In our region, there have been less than 10 per year in each of Beaufort and Jasper Counties. There are local organizations that are already assisting households in our area to provide additional funding for homebuyers.

BJHT is well positioned to assist our local developers of affordable housing, organizations that assist homebuyers, and organizations that are providing home repairs by leveraging state funding where it is available and applicable.

### **Interim Executive Director Report**

Dana Totman reiterated that the Board will need to gather some thoughts on working committees as we move forward. Dana continues to meet with local communities and government officials. He is working to schedule the meeting with Jasper County (the only local community he has not met with to date). He shared that most have been supportive of the direction BJHT is headed and they appreciate the enhanced communication we are providing. Dana spoke of the newsletter that we are sending out. There have been 2 sent out and we work to share those monthly with our database of contacts. Dana continues to speak and deliver presentations for local groups and municipalities. Some of the upcoming engagements include SOLOCO Board and Community Foundation of the Lowcountry Board meetings both in March and the Hilton Head Community Services and Public Safety Committee meeting in April. Dana is also working to develop an agreement between CCDC and Beaufort County. Beaufort County agreed to give CCDC \$600,000 for affordable housing funding but to have BJHT administer the funding, etc. The Town of Hilton Head is also providing \$600,000 to CCDC. Dana added that the group also has private funding and some volunteer horsepower behind them. Dana added that his 20 hours per week get consumed quickly with the above tasks. The Executive search was completed in-house by Dana and Jennifer and should end with a positive resolution and an offer to the successful candidate. He also commented that the relationship between Beaufort County and BJHT is a work in progress after the relationship with Community Works ended. Dick S. added that with a new Executive Director anticipated to start on April 1<sup>st</sup>, he would like to defer setting up committees until after he arrives. Dick S. and Matt D. will confer with new Executive Director and bring back a recommendation to the Board.

### **Other Business**

Matt D. asked if the Town of Hilton Head has reached out regarding their vacant seat on this Board. The Town has asked for volunteers but has yet to appoint someone. Dick S. said that a conversation between himself and Marc Orlando, Town Manager, confirmed that the Town is financially committed but they just want to find the right person.

Matt D. also inquired about the status of developing a plan that would allow jurisdictions to take advantage of 15% of the 3% ATAX collected for use in affordable housing. The Town of Hilton Head hired a consultant and had a plan designed for them. Dick S. added that if BJHT wanted to add that service to our member organizations, we should do it if they are willing to commit the 15% to affordable housing and they could use that as their contribution to us. Some organizations may not want to do that. In other areas, the amount of ATAX collected may be so small that it is not worthwhile. The question is should BJHT position itself so that there is a completed plan for the region with a chapter for each local government that is part of BJHT. The process has

not been finalized but he believes there could be a lot of efficiency in making a regional plan.

### **Recess**

There was no further business to discuss. Dick Stewart asked for a motion to recess, and the meeting moved into Executive Session at 11:14am. Matt G. made the motion, second by Wendy Z. The motion was approved unanimously. Jennifer T. left the meeting for the Executive Session.

Following the Executive Session, the Board resumed the meeting. Wendy Z. made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Matt G. The meeting adjourned at 11:38am.