

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF RALEIGH
(Continuation of June 23, 2022 Meeting)
July 14, 2022
4:00 pm

The members of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Raleigh, North Carolina met at 900 Haynes Street and via Zoom on Thursday, July 14, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

The Board Chair called the meeting to order and upon roll call the following were present and absent:

Present: Eric Braun, Valerie Crutchfield, Susan Ellinger, Niya Fonville, Arne Morris, Gregg Warren, Joe Whitehouse, Yolanda Winstead.

Absent: Bahati Mutisya

Visitors: Charles Francis, Francis Law Firm, PLLC;

RHA Staff: Suzy Bryan, Liz Edgerton, Laura McCann, Jennifer Morgan, Donna Perez, Jason Schloop, Gwen Wall

The Board Chair declared a quorum present and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Board Retreat

Mrs. Edgerton said a Doodle Scheduler was sent out to the Board and seven people responded, two are pending. So far, the overwhelming response for a retreat date is August 19th. Do we want to wait for everyone else to look at that or if we want to just move forward?

Commissioner Morris asked that we move forward with August 19th.

Mrs. Edgerton said we will start looking for a place to hold that retreat. She asked the Board if they wanted to invite the Executive Staff to the retreat.

Commissioner Braun said he thinks it would be helpful to include the Executive Staff but he'll leave it up to the rest of the Board.

Commissioner Warren said we might want to have a mix, at certain points have the full Executive Staff and the Board and other times have the Board only.

Commissioner Fonville said she agrees with that suggestion.

Commissioner Whitehouse suggested we have our facilitator help put something together so we know what the agenda for the day would look like, as well and how the Executive Staff might participate.

Mrs. Edgerton said she talked to EJP and they will put together an agenda. Maybe we can have staff there part of the time, but not the whole day. That way we can discuss Board items separately. Since the entire Board will be there, we would advertise that and it will be open to the public. We'll make sure we make that posting.

Commissioner Warren asked if the CAD Board should be invited.

Commissioner Braun said he thought this was not a strategic planning, as much as for the RHA Board to get on the same page first. I think we need to eventually have a retreat with the CAD Board.

Commissioner Ellinger agreed. There's a lot to be discussed with CAD, but this may not be the forum.

Mrs. Edgerton said we'll move forward with having staff there for an hour or two, depending on what the EJP agenda looks like. I'll share that with you when I get it from her.

Hybrid Board Meeting Question

On Monday, Governor Cooper announced that he is going to lift the emergency order on August 15th. Last month we talked about whether we could continue with a hybrid meeting – and Charles said that it may be possible. At this point, we need to confirm if that is a possibility since the August 15 date has been announced.

Mr. Francis said he will get a memo to the staff and Board about it next week. It's not as straightforward as one would think. The City Council and Wake County Commissioners will not be able to continue to meet remotely, they are going to have to meet in person. However, the statute that people are relying on and coming to that conclusion for them is not a statute that applies to housing authorities and some other appointed Boards. There is an argument that we might be able to continue to meet remotely, as long as we meet all the requirements of the Open Meeting Statute. I have another lawyer reviewing that now. I also want to talk with several other folks around the state. We're not the only public agency that is facing this issue and I'll see what the consensus is.

Mrs. Edgerton said we would definitely need to make that decision soon since our August meeting would fall after that date.

Public Comments

Last month we had a Walnut Terrace resident who spoke during our public comment period. And at that time, the Board requested that I look into these issues. The resident has reached

out by phone and has left a couple of messages. Mrs. Anderson spoke with the resident today, trying to determine exactly what they wanted to discuss with us, just to make sure we come with the correct people and documentation that we need for the meeting.

Typically, we ask our residents to try to resolve things with their property manager first. However, due to her request, we are going to set up the meeting so that she can meet with myself and Mrs. Anderson, and anyone else that Mrs. Anderson thinks may be able to help.

We are looking into that and I wanted to update the Board.

RAD Update

We had three scheduled RAD information meetings this past month – one in person and two Zoom meetings. We had a few residents at each of those meetings. This was just to update them on where we are in the process for the RAD conversion. There were a few questions asked and Mrs. McCann updated the website with those FAQs.

RHA's closing attorney is finishing up some title work for Berkshire Village and we are doing that before we can submit the final paperwork to HUD. We are getting all of the signatures on the forms that we needed and we're getting that submitted to HUD. For the other three properties, we are still looking for HUD to issue those RCCs. Mrs. Morgan has been in contact with them and she has answered all of the questions they've had. It is still our hope to close on August 1st and have leases and HAP contracts signed on October 1st.

Hot Water at Carriage House

Something that we're working on in our Contract Services Department is a hot water issue at Carriage House Apartments. We have two boilers at Carriage House that provide hot water to the building. These boilers are located outside of the building and one of those has been working only intermediately.

A work order was put in and we've had the contractor on site to look at that. He determined that we needed to replace the pilot unit (and that part needed to be ordered). The part came in this week, and he was on site today to install it. Once he got it installed, he realized there were other components that were not working. He will need to get back with us on what those components are.

In the meantime, Contract Services is going to be looking into whether we need to replace those units. They were installed around 1998 or 1999. They are inspected by the North Carolina Department of Labor annually and our next inspection is coming up in November of this year. Some of the residents have reached out and we have communicated with them about this intermittent problem, and we're looking to resolve it by getting a temporary boiler on site.

RHA Audit

RHA had its audit in June. The auditors finished up their site work on Tuesday, the 28th. Dale Rector was here until Thursday, June 30th. He had an exit meeting with the Audit Committee and he recapped to the committee the financial strength of the agency.

Mr. Rector informed the committee that we are going to have an audit finding for Fiscal Year Ending 2022. It's related to the timeliness of the annual re-certifications for our tenant files in our Housing Choice Voucher Program. This issue stemmed from several problems (it's a perfect storm with the pandemic). It was difficult to get paperwork, and we weren't having people come on site at that time. The moratorium had been issued which prevented the landlords from eviction, so it tied our hands from getting the paperwork on time. We've also had some staffing issues.

We have already taken steps to correct this finding. We held a leadership staff meeting on July 6th and we are shifting our compliance team's focus to help assist with these re-certifications. Compliance works out of the Finance Department and they typically review files. However, now they are going to be helping to get these re-certifications caught up. We've also started training a temporary employee to help do some preliminary certification sheets. This would allow our staff to focus on the bigger problem of getting the re-certifications processed.

We've also reached out to the temp agency to try to get more temps on hand. Unfortunately, we are having some difficulties as they are having problems providing temps. We are trying to get as many as we can in here and we hope to have one or two join the team to try to get us moving forward on this.

Our staff has agreed to work as much overtime as they can to help us get this processed as quickly as possible. I'm going to follow up in a meeting next week with the Leased Housing team to make sure that we have gained a little momentum and see if there's anything else that I can do to help move that along.

Commissioner Fonville asked if RHA has included a way to turn some of these temps into permanent positions. It might help with the retention, just as a practical matter, if they can get benefits or some kind of permanency. They might be inclined to stay longer.

Mrs. Edgerton said the Leased Housing Department typically hires a lot of their employees through the temp agency. I can ask Mrs. Batts to look at buying out those contracts earlier, instead of working it through that period that the temp agency's request before we have to pay that fee. That gives them more of a buy-in early on (if the temp coming in seems to catch on to what they're doing).

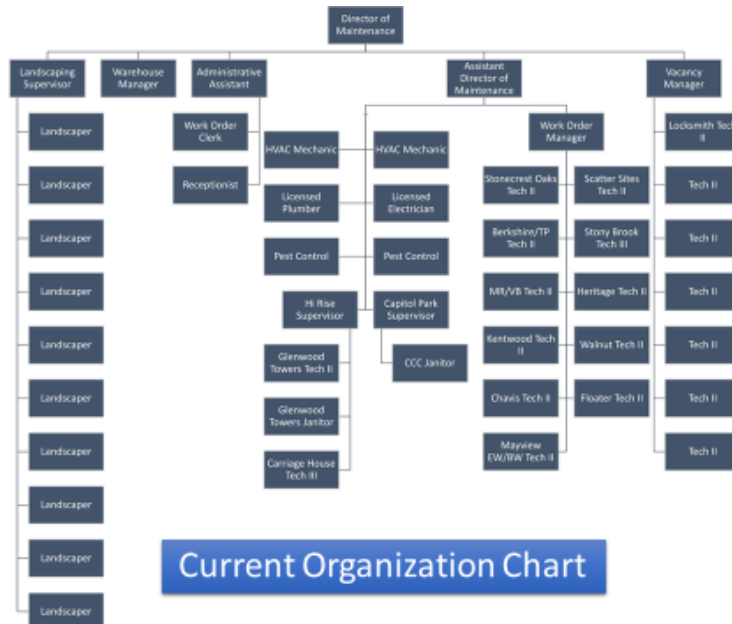
NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Edgerton said Jason Schloop, RHA's Director of Maintenance, approached me and Shannon Bowen, the HR Manager, with an idea. This stems from discussions that he's had with his staff. He approached me with this idea and I fully support it. I will turn it over to Mr. Schloop to present the next resolution.

Mr. Schloop said he has been with RHA for six months. When I first came to RHA, I looked at the org chart and reviewed the development processes – looking for new visions within the organization. After I got done reviewing this with the Executive Director, I was able to meet with the staff individually and talk through what these employees have seen in the past and what they see for themselves and growth patterns within RHA.

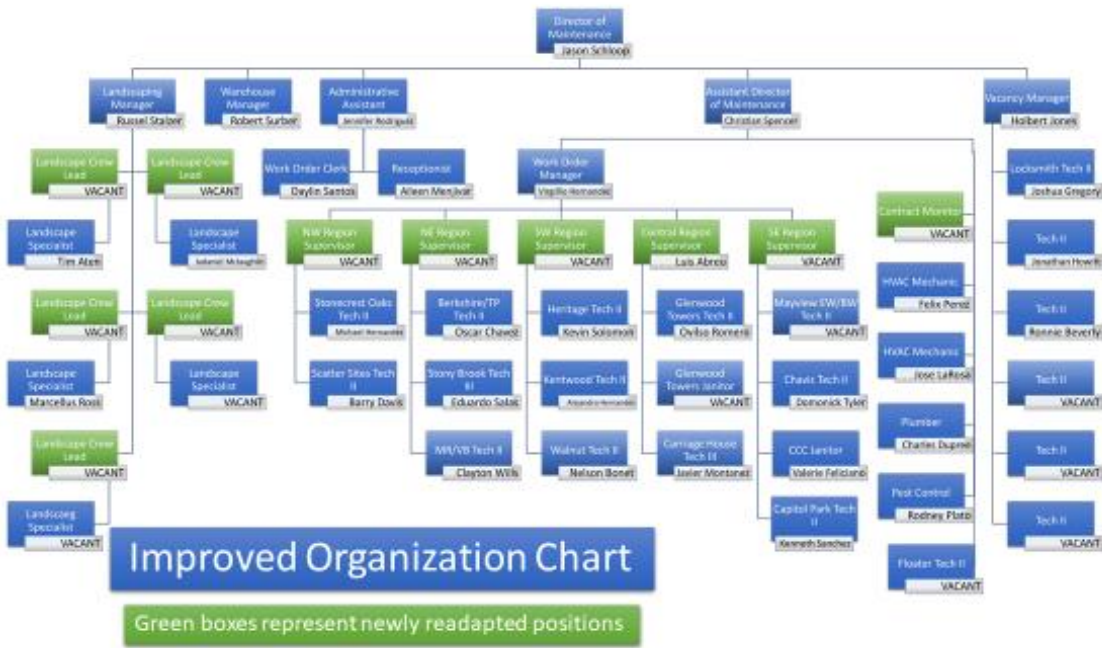
Currently, RHA has a lot of great employees. We have fantastic technicians who really have a lot of passion and talent that they can offer to RHA. The most common thing that I heard from the staff was that they don't really see a growth pattern for RHA. They don't see them moving up within the organization – whether it be a Landscaping or a Maintenance Tech position.

Over the course of the past couple of months, I've been evaluating how to cast a vision of opportunity for the employees and for RHA – and what would be the best benefit, not only for RHA but also the employees. My Assistant Director and I looked at the org chart, and we evaluated this in in detail. This is what our current org chart looks like:



Most of these positions do not allow much upward movement opportunity for a Technician, specifically in the maintenance division. If we want to promote someone, we have to do it with the appraisal process, and a lot of these employees can only go to a Tech II or Tech III position. That is not much of a promotion for them because they're not supervising anybody at that point in time.

This is the newer org chart that I am proposing today:



Positions that are highlighted in green would be newly-created positions in the maintenance division, to show growth and potential for current in-house employees. Supervisory roles that were created. It would bring morale-building and growth opportunity. It would improve our customer service and also stabilize our training. These new roles that we create would allow us to be able to spend time with new employees on site on a daily basis – to train them to improve their skill set and improve the way of life for RHA and our residents.

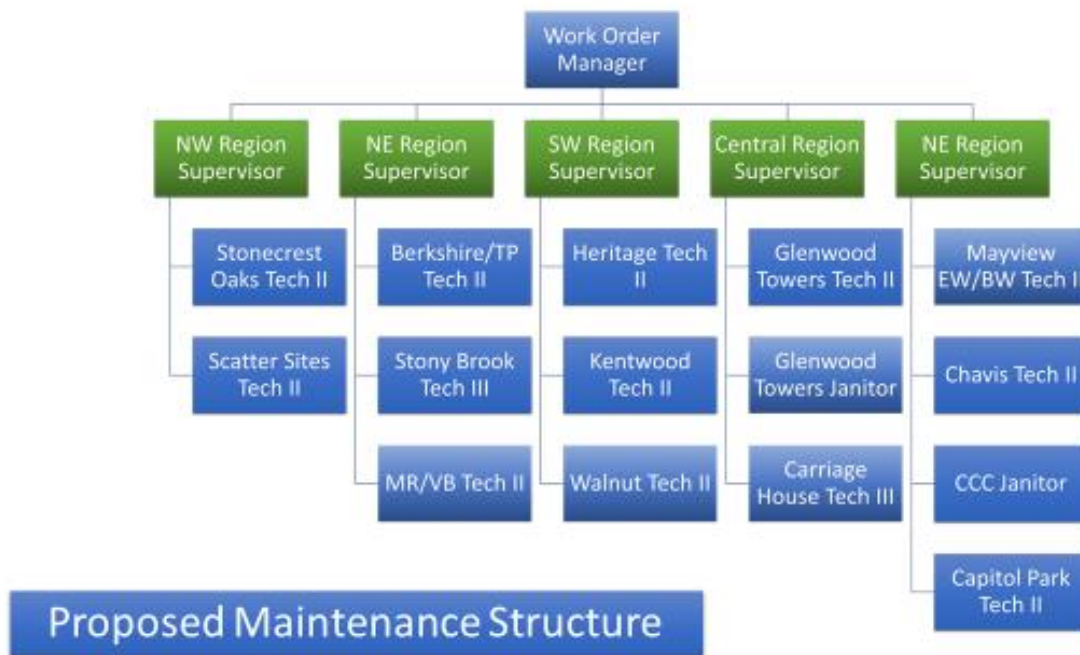


This slide presents what we see as each region. The Northeast region would include RHA’s Stonecrest, Oaks, and Scattered Site regions. The Northeast region would cover Berkshire

Village, Terrace Park, Valleybrook, Meadowridge, and Stony Brook. The Central region is currently intact, which is RHA’s Glenwood Towers and Carriage House region. These employees work extremely well together. They’re on the same page and they understand what it takes to get the job done.

The Southwest region is our biggest region (Walnut Terrace is included in this region) and would be 502 units. The Southeast region would include Capitol Park, Eastwood, Birchwood, Mayview, and Chavis Heights.

We attempted to divvy them up as centralized as possible to ensure that we're getting maximized coverage for each region. I think this would be the best option to us moving forward.



These would be the five positions that we are asking for approval to integrate into our org chart. One of these regions is actually already created – the Glenwood Towers and Carriage House region. This gives a lot of opportunity for our current technicians to be able to apply and be able to advance our skills in the organization.



Another big impact would be our Landscaping Division. We decided to make it a team effort and put them in so they can start becoming a lead and understand what it takes to become a leader in our organization. Also, changing the titles to “Landscape Crew Lead” and “Landscape Specialist” will give us the ability to attract more people to RHA.

We want to increase the culture, morale, and teamwork within the Maintenance Division and changing this org chart will bring a lot of that to our organization. It helps with retention because employees will feel confident that they have growth potential and would be more likely to stay with RHA. This is also a training opportunity. We will post these positions and try to hire within our current staff. The employees who don't get selected will have a training module for them to create the opportunity to become a supervisor.

Commissioner Braun thanked Mr. Schloop for his presentation. He asked what the budget impact will be for this change.

Mrs. Edgerton said four positions will be deleted and four new positions will be added. Some of those were a lower grade and some were a higher grade. The maximum budget effect would total approximately \$7,500 – so it has very minimal budget impact.

Commissioner Braun said he appreciates the thoughtfulness of the proposal, thinking about how this can improve the culture and give staff opportunities for professional career enhancement. He fully supports these changes.

Commissioner Fonville said she commends Mr. Schloop for the work that he has put into this proposal. This goes to the heart of what businesses need to do when talking about recruitment and retention. She appreciates that he took the initiative for these changes and thanked him for his leadership.

Commissioner Warren said he agrees and thought the presentation was well-done. He asked about the HVAC and Plumber positions that were eliminated. He asked if the thought is that those positions would be better out-sourced.

Mr. Schloop said in the current grade-step chart, it would be challenging to hire a Licensed HVAC and Licensed Plumber with those pay ranges. When someone is licensed, they are typically gravitating toward their own business opportunities and RHA would not be able to retain them. RHA will contract out for those services (which we are currently doing). That process is working smoothly.

Commissioner Braun thanked Mrs. Edgerton for encouraging Mr. Schloop to put this proposal together. It is good to hear from additional employees who are doing hard work for RHA.

Mrs. Edgerton said this proposal was presented to the Executive Staff this week to encourage other departments to think about solutions to any issues they may have.

Commissioner Morris asked if this model translates to any other departments.

Mrs. Edgerton said she encouraged everyone to take a look at it. At the next Executive Staff meeting we will dive into any staffing issues they may have.

Commissioner Whitehouse also commended the staff for putting this proposal together.

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF RALEIGH

RESOLUTION NO. 49 (2022)

WHEREAS, with Resolution 4 on February 15, 2022, the Board approved the master operating budget for the Housing Authority of the City of Raleigh (“RHA”) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the master operating budget includes a schedule of all positions and salaries; and

WHEREAS, RHA’s fiscal year ends with the March 31 quarter but it has multiple funding years for various programs; and

WHEREAS, attached to this resolution and thereby made part of this resolution is a table showing the:

- Newly added positions
- Proposed deleted positions
- Recommended title changes; and

WHEREAS, the proposal of this resolution would provide greater opportunity for advancement among employees; and

WHEREAS, creating the new structure would allow for proper coverage of sites and give way to freely expand into newly acquired property; and

WHEREAS, while the hiring difficulties present a challenge in acclimating to a suitable level of staffing, the reorganization would showcase a more appealing roadmap for new hires, as well as improving current employee morale; and

WHEREAS, the new structure proposed would allow those in supervisory positions the capacity to provide more suitable training to new hires; and

WHEREAS, the distribution of regional coverage would greatly impact the level of customer service in a positive way, ensuring no unassigned properties without a technician would not go neglected; and

WHEREAS, staff is also recommending changes to some position titles to make them consistent with titles used in the private market to make recruiting for vacancies more competitive; and

WHEREAS, the model currently proposed is already being used at one of our sites with great success;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF RALEIGH that the following Maintenance Department changes be made and salary budgets adjusted accordingly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the appropriate budgets be amended to reflect the additional equipment and training necessary to perform the requisite job duties

Delete	Add
Maintenance Dept:	
Licensed Electrician – Grade 16 (1 Position)	Maintenance Supervisor – Grade 13
Licensed HVAC Mechanic – Grade 16 (1 Position)	Maintenance Supervisor – Grade 13
Pest Control Technician – Grade 8 (1 Position)	Maintenance Supervisor – Grade 13
Maintenance Technician II – Grade 8(1 Position)	Contract Monitor – Grade 13

Current Title	New Title
Maintenance Department:	
Landscaping II – Grade 9 (5 Positions)	Landscape Crew Lead – Grade 9
Landscape I – Grade 7 (5 Positions)	Landscape Specialist – Grade 7
Landscaping Supervisor – Grade 15 (1 Position)	Landscaping Manager – Grade 15
Vacancy Supervisor – Grade 15 (1 Position)	Vacancy Manager – Grade 15
Work Order Supervisor – Grade 15 (1 Position)	Work Order Manager – Grade 15

Commissioner Whitehouse moved and Commissioner Winstead seconded approval of the foregoing resolution. A vote being called, the ayes and nays were as follows:

Aye: Eric Braun, Valerie Crutchfield, Susan Ellinger, Niya Fonville, Arne Morris, Gregg Warren, Joe Whitehouse, Yolanda Winstead.

Nay: None

Resolution No. 49 (2022) has been adopted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Fonville moved and Commissioner Winstead moved to go into Executive Session to discuss a Personnel matter.

A vote being called, the ayes and nays were as follows:

Aye: Eric Braun, Valerie Crutchfield, Susan Ellinger, Niya Fonville, Arne Morris, Gregg Warren, Joe Whitehouse, Yolanda Winstead.

Nay: None

The Board went into Executive Session to discuss a Personnel matter.

(The Board reconvened from Executive Session.)

Commissioner Braun made a motion to ratify entering into a contract with Gans Gans & Associates for executive search services related to retaining a CEO for RHA. Commissioner Fonville seconded the motion.

A vote being called, the ayes and nays were as follows:

Aye: Eric Braun, Valerie Crutchfield, Susan Ellinger, Niya Fonville, Arne Morris, Gregg Warren, Joe Whitehouse, Yolanda Winstead.

Nay: None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.