



Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust (BJHT) Board Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2025

Attendance In Person

Board Members: Dick Stewart, Carmen Washington, Christian Kata, Matt Garnes, Wendy Zara, James Williams, Caitlin Reid, Ashley Feaster, Matt Davis, Jan Malinowski, Ethan James, Christine Rogers-Raetsch

Staff and Invited Guests: Claude Hicks and Jennifer Tuckwiller

Absent

Board Members: Camika Beaton, Courtney Hampson, Tom Henz, David House, Victoria Smalls

Chairman Stewart welcomed everyone, established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10 AM.

Chairman Stewart asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 17, 2025 meeting. Wendy Zara made a motion to accept the minutes and Christian Kata seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee, Christian Kata, reviewed the financial report. They have initiated invoices to the jurisdictional partners for Year 3 and that is going well.

Audit came back with no suggestions, and tax returns were filed. Crowley, Wechsler & Associates, LLC completed the audit; Bill Quarles was impressed; signed letter of engagement with them for the 2025 fiscal year audit, which will be conducted on an annual basis.

Wendy Zara asked if we could obtain a copy of the IGA with all signatures. Jennifer said she would circulate when fully executed - two more signatures to obtain.

Christian continued noting the Finance Committee is bringing forward a motion for approval of the draft budget. He made note to the growth in revenue of 3% and growth in expenses of 3% -- this is resulting from:

- the audit was \$2,000 cheaper because of a 12-month term rather than an initial 18 months
- CFO fees for Bill Quarles increased from 20 hours per month to 50 hours
- Compensation for Claude and Jennifer was increased to bring them up to market rates.

Hearing no questions, Chairman Stewart asked for a motion to approve. Wendy Zara moved, and Ashley Feaster seconded. Unanimously approved.

Next, Christian turned to the Ninety-Seven Goethe Road project, which Finance Committee is bringing forward for approval. As a reminder, this encompasses 3 units in the Town of Bluffton. The mortgage is being issued through Christian's bank, so he recused himself from consideration of the project. The timeframe for completing the project is roughly 1 year and would be required to keep the units at affordable rates for 15 years. The developer is asking for \$27,000.

James Williams made the motion to approve; Matt Davis seconded. Unanimously approved.

Chair of the Governance Committee, Ashley Feaster, has a few things to bring forward:

Meeting schedule starting in July was circulated with the Board meeting packet. No questions and Wendy Zara moved for approval; Christian Kata gave a second; unanimously approved.

Next, board officers slate and renewing members were included in the Board meeting packet for consideration; Ashley presented this in the form of a motion; Wendy Zara seconded; all in favor and unanimously approved.

Chair of the Programs Committee Wendy Zara reported they are continuing to work to get money out of the state and talking to Tom Davis. She will be sending him an email with some documentation that he has requested - specifically, a proposal.

Claude Hicks said they are asking for funds to be allocated to the Trust for management rather than remaining in the hands of the state; there is \$20-24M allocated to home repair funds in the SC Housing and Finance.

Jan noted that the members of the Board for SC Housing and Finance are not local to our area - we need to possibly attack it from that standpoint. A political conversation to say how do we get lowcountry people on the Board so we can affect some change.

Turning next to our Executive Director report, Claude Hicks, described:

- Carrington Manor has been inspected - it will meet its tax credit requirements, but they will not meet their requirements for lease up by 12/31 and will eat a penalty (downward adjuster - development is aware of this); developer is short \$350k; product and building itself is very nice and will be well-received by the senior living community
- One of our goals was to become the "go to" with respect to housing; we've seen this happening with Beaufort County and the CCDC review
- Good discussion with Hilton Head Council - been invited to meet mid-July to discuss how they intend to move forward considering the recent resignations of their housing staff.
- Jennifer is putting in applications with CCF, SCACED and Truist. Despite state denials, we are putting in applications for funding through other resources.
- City of Beaufort Home Repair program will launch in July 2025; dividing the city into 5 zones and giving equal amount to each zone; once application cut off is

over, we will look to see if there is any zone that didn't receive applications and will prorata apply across other zones

- Anything new on Justice Square? Met with the County (two new lawyers, plus relatively new County Administrator) representatives; County Administrator asked tough questions and will not endorse anything unless he fully understands what it all means; primary question was is there a plan B, C, and D - Claude says, yes; in October, developer will find out if he receives funding (BJHT will then step back in and help with the planning) and developer will have 90 days to close with the State. Dick noted that we have not formally committed funds to this project, but we want to see it succeed.
- If you've read the paper, the project behind Lowes known as Garden Oaks has experienced five shootings since October (3 people died). With an affordable housing project, there are timelines. Often, the Developer puts in aggressive schedule and the property management company rushes and admits people that they shouldn't, simply to fill units. 15-20% of renters end up being evicted because they don't pay or don't provide the correct documentation, etc. The City stepped in and set up police substation to increase police presence. BJHT has been told six evictions occurred last week and likely to continue for the next six months or so.
- Receiving a lot of inquiries from big developers, e.g., Pulte, Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase, etc.

New Business -

Chairman Stewart asked if there was any further business to discuss.

Ethan James gave a quick update from the Beaufort Housing Authority - two big projects in the works (Marshpointe in City of Bft; Sandalwood in HHI) where they are working to reposition the developments (public and private housing). Work orders from a maintenance standpoint are stable.

Chairman Stewart noted that HHI is coming to grips with the idea that workforce housing must be provided because not as many people are riding the buses to work in the service industries. Turning to Claude / Jennifer for advice.

Matt Davis says Hardeeville is looking to purchase property, work with developers, etc. The website has the LIHTC scoring - is there anything we can do as an organization or individually to change the scoring in our favor? Claude noted that all of Jasper County is designated as "farmland," which means that none of the land qualifies for tax credits - we are working as an organization to resolve this. Housing Finance agencies across the country have so many applications as compared to funds, so they look for ways to eliminate applications quickly to narrow the playing field.

James Williams noted the State Office of Economic Opportunity is coming to visit next week to look at the homes subject to home repair grants, etc.

Matt Garnes said the Town authorized listings for two parcels owned by the Town of Yemassee (small infill lots, mostly) and trying to identify others.

Christian Kata / South Atlantic Bank is hosting a ribbon-cutting for their new bank in Beaufort; submitted federal home loan bank application (LCLV received \$200k from a grant for heirs property prevention); working to figure out how to pull all the partners together - must complete a minimum of 250 wills.

Carmen Washington noted she has several investors who are purchasing mobile homes specifically for Section 8 Housing (which would utilize allocated vouchers).

Claude Hicks noted that DR Horton and other developers are questioning the design requirements from the County and saying it creates an issue for developers because it can add thousands of dollars to the overall costs.

After hearing the above status reports from board members, Chairman Stewart asked if there was any new business. Hearing no new business, Chairman Stewart asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 11:25 AM.