



Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust (BJHT) Board Meeting Minutes

October 6, 2025

Attendance In Person

Board Members: Matt Davis, Wendy Zara, and Christine Rogers-Raetsch

Staff and Invited Guests: Claude Hicks, Jennifer Tuckwiller, and Dale Douthat.

Attendance Virtually

Board Members: David House, Ashley Feaster, Courtney Hampson, Christian Kata, Tom Henz, Carmen Washington and James Williams

Absent

Board Members: Dick Stewart, Caitlin Reid, Camika Beaton, Ethan James, Bill Quarles, Matt Garnes, Victoria Smalls, Jan Malinowski

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair, Matt Davis, at 10:04am.

Claude Hicks introduced guest speaker, Dale Douthat, President and CEO of United Way of the Lowcountry. Dale presented a short presentation on a Self-Sufficiency initiative that is underway with a group of public and private stakeholders. 2 issues came out as the most pressing for the region: Cradle to Career Education and Housing. Next steps will be to form 2 larger task forces to tackle each of these topics and address how we can move forward as a region toward self sufficiency for all or residents.

It was determined that a quorum of members was present for the meeting and the business portion of the meeting began at 10:15. Vice-Chair Davis asked for a motion of the consent agenda. Wendy made the motion and Christine seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Programs Committee

At the September meeting, three grantees with unspent funds at the one-year mark were reviewed. Each case was handled individually based on capacity to spend and prior performance. After much discussion, the Programs committee approved the following actions for each grantee and is bringing them to the Board for approval.

- Beaufort-Jasper EOC: Spent \$47,500 out of \$150,000 awarded. They will have the ability to apply for home repair funds on a case-by-case basis while funding is available with all repairs completed by January 31, 2026.
- Jasper County Neighbors United: \$8,772 remains out of \$90,000 awarded for home repairs. They have the ability to use the remainder of the funds and repairs must be completed by December 31, 2025. \$0 spent out of \$130,000 for homebuyer assistance funding. Revoke funding and return initial tranche of \$50,000 to BJHT for non-performance.
- Rise with Living Hope: \$20,000 spent out of \$90,000 for home repairs. They may utilize remaining \$30,000 for repairs already underway or approved by their Board. These repairs must be completed by January 31, 2025. \$35,000 spent of its \$100,000 award for homebuyer assistance. They may utilize \$15,000 in remaining funds for the 2 approved homebuyer in process. They may also apply for homebuyer assistance funds on a case-by-case basis as funding remains available through December 31, 2025.

Wendy provided the motion as Committee Chair and Christine seconded. The motion passed unanimously. It was noted by Matt D. that he was glad BJHT is holding these organizations accountable. He also stressed that BJHT would lose credibility to fund without producing results.

Finance Committee

Committee Chair, Christian Kata, had 2 items from committee for approval.

- **Habitat for Humanity - Homebuyer Assistance Program**
 - \$10,000 approved to assist a new homebuyer for a home in Ridgeland (first of three planned units).
 - Habitat has met all program requirements and will have additional requests for the other 2 homes later in the year.

Christian made the motion to approve \$10,000 in homebuyer assistance funding to Habitat for Humanity, Wendy seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

- **Part-Time Employee Addition**
 - Approved hiring of Ashley Strouse for 20 hours/week at \$35/hour under contract (no benefits).
 - Budget impact deemed minimal by CFO and Finance Committee and know that Claude and Jennifer need additional help.

Christian made the motion to approve a contract with Ashley Strouse and David seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Governance Committee

- Committee unanimously recommended three candidates for the Community Education and Outreach Committee:
 - Christy Turner (United Way)
 - Ann Caywood (Lowcountry Legal Volunteers)
 - Travis Fortson (Ameris Bank)

The committee brings the motion forward as a unanimous vote with no need for a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

1. City of Beaufort Home Repair Program

- Launched successfully; intake events well-attended.
- Key findings: many applicants are elderly and on fixed incomes; heirs property issues prevalent.
- Lowcountry Council of Governments conducting income verification; local title attorney verifying ownership to ensure transparency.
- Transition occurring at City of Beaufort with JJ Sauve's departure; coordination continuing.

2. Blueprint for Change Event

- Over 50 attendees; highly successful.
- Elected officials requested a follow-up session (November) exclusively for local government leaders, featuring Dr. Laura Ullrich focusing on local economic impacts.

3. Project Updates

- Carrington Manor (LIHTC senior housing): Now connected to utilities; first residents expected early November. Dedication event anticipated.
- Justice Square (Downtown Beaufort): Developer Jeff Wheeler withdrew application after county procedural delay; discussions ongoing.
- Annex Development (Parker Zee, Annex Group): Ranked 11th out of 28 in SC Housing scoring; final outcome pending.

4. Infrastructure Funding

- BJWSA announced \$1M per municipality over five years for water/sewer improvements. Developers will be encouraged to coordinate with local municipalities/counties.

5. Legislative & Agency Updates

- Senator Tom Davis exploring pilot program for BJHT to administer home repair set-asides directly.
- Estimated statewide funds: \$1.75-\$2 million.
- SC Housing Executive Director Richard Hutto retiring; successor not yet named.

6. Beaufort Housing Authority

- Executive Director Julie Davis resigned Oct. 1, 2025, following multiple staff departures.
- Concerns raised regarding program continuity and pending RAD conversions in Beaufort and Hilton Head.
- Developer Kevin Connelly met with BJHT to discuss project progress.

Hearing no additional business to be discussed, Vice-Chair Davis asked for a motion to adjourn. Wendy made a motion to adjourn, and Christine seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:42am.

Summary of Actions Taken During Meeting

1. Consent Agenda approved and included the following documents:
 - August 18, 2025, meeting minutes
 - Financial reports for July and August 2025
 - FY24-25 Audit and Tax Return
2. \$10,000 in Homebuyer Assistance funding was approved for Habitat for Humanity for a new home build in Ridgeland.
3. Approved contract for Ashley Strouse as a part-time employee for BJHT.
4. Chrystie Turner, Anne Caywood and Travis Fortson were approved for service on the Community Education and Outreach committee forming in early 2026.