

MINUTES . . . REGULAR MEETING . . . JANUARY 12, 2026

The members of the Bethlehem Housing Authority met in a regular session on January 12, 2026 at 4:00 P.M. (IN PERSON MEETING). Those present and absent were as follows

PRESENT

Mr. J. Marc Rittle, Chairperson
Mr. Rogelio Ortiz, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Lindsey Clifton
Mrs. Iris Linares
Mrs. Rachel Leon

ABSENT

Also present were: John Ritter - **absent**, Secretary-Treasurer; Diana Moreno, Assistant Secretary; Staff Members and members of the general public. William W. Matz, Jr., Esq., Solicitor, **absent**.

Board Reorganization and Election of 2026 Officers

The election of officers was turned over to Attorney Matz, who advised that questions had been raised regarding whether the Board Reorganization and Election of 2026 Officers should be addressed, as the item was referenced in the meeting title but not explicitly listed on the agenda.

Attorney Matz recommended that, to cure any potential Sunshine Act concerns, the Board formally add the Reorganization/Election of 2026 Officers to the agenda by majority vote.

Mrs. Linares made a motion to add the Reorganization/Election of 2026 Officers to the agenda. Mrs. Leon seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes - Rittle/Ortiz/Linares/Leon/Clifton; Nays - None

Attorney Matz outlined the procedure for the election of officers for the year 2026 in accordance with the Authority's bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order. He stated that all nominations would be from the floor; each nomination shall be processed separately beginning with the chairperson followed by the vice chairperson; no second would be required although one may be made as a form of endorsement; nominations are closed when no further nominations are made.

Nominations for Chairman and Vice Chairman for the BHA Board of Commissioners for the ensuing year January 12, 2026 to December 31, 2026 were opened.

Attorney Matz called for nominations for Chairperson of the Board.

Mrs. Linares nominated Vice Chairperson Rogelio Ortiz. Mr. Ortiz nominated Chairperson Clifton. Chairperson Clifton stated that she was ineligible to serve another term as Chairperson due to the bylaws limiting consecutive terms and declined the nomination. Mr. Ortiz then nominated Mr. J. Marc Rittle for Chairperson. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed.

With no objection the Board proceeded with a written ballot vote. Attorney Matz announced that Mr. J Marc Rittle was elected Chairperson by majority vote.

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Attorney Matz opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman of the Board.

Attorney Matz then opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chairperson. A discussion ensued regarding eligibility and term limits, during which Attorney Matz clarified that the two-term limitation applied only to the Chairperson position under the bylaws. Ms. Clifton requested clarification regarding the procedure in the event a nominee's term were to expire mid-year. Mr. Rittle advised that the member would be reappointed. Attorney Matz stated that, although there is no specific precedent, Robert's Rules of Order provide that any vacancy in the Chair or Vice Chair position would be filled by the Board, potentially through a subsequent reorganization meeting. Ms. Clifton thanked the Board for the clarification.

Mrs. Leon nominated Mr. Rogelio Ortiz to continue serving as Vice-Chairperson. Mr. Ortiz indicated his willingness to continue. There being no further nomination, nominations were closed.

Attorney Matz stated that there are no further nominations made for this position. The Board unanimously approved Mr. Rogelio Ortiz as Vice-President.

Roll Call: Ayes - Clifton/Ortiz/Linares/Leon/Rittle; Nays - None

Attorney Matz concluded the reorganization and turned the meeting over to Chairperson Rittle. Mr. Ortiz congratulated Chairperson Rittle on his election. Chairperson Rittle thanked Mrs. Lindsey Clifton for her leadership over the past two years and acknowledged her continued contributions to the Board. Mrs. Clifton thanked the Board.

Chairperson Rittle presented the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 8, 2025, were presented and approved. Mrs. Linares made a motion to accept the minutes of December 8, 2025. Mrs. Clifton seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes - Clifton/Ortiz/Linares/Leon/Rittle; Nays - None

Chairperson Rittle presented the Treasurer's report for December.

Mrs. Leon made a motion to approve the treasurer's report for December 2025. Mr. Ortiz seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes - Clifton/Ortiz/Linares/Leon/Rittle; Nays - None

Chairperson Rittle presented the financial report for December 2025.

Mr. Snyder reviewed the Income and Expense Report, noting that income was slightly above projections. He explained that projected interest income from HUD had been removed after HUD reclaimed the interest, making the overall income performance slightly better than anticipated. Expenses were running somewhat lower at this time, which he indicated was expected; however, he noted that costs would likely increase as the Authority moves further into the winter season.

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Mr. Snyder reported that total cash balances were approximately \$360,000 higher than the previous month, including approximately \$102,000 in rental income, with the majority of remaining funds held in the general fund. He stated that the Authority has not been drawing down subsidy funds due to earlier uncertainty regarding HUD's subsidy handling process. He added that it now appears HUD may require a different drawdown method, and he is waiting for further clarification before proceeding. No subsidy funds have been drawn down to date, but he noted that funds would be drawn before year-end if necessary.

Regarding the Section 8 report for January, Mr. Snyder stated that the Authority leased 390 units, which is two fewer than the previous month, and currently has 10 vouchers issued and in use in the field.

In addition, Mr. Snyder also advised that Mr. Steve N. Kutsuflakis from Barbacane Thorton and Company will present the audit report via Zoom accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. He further noted that HUD has already approved the Authority's audit, which was unusually fast, as the process typically takes several months.

Chairperson Rittle asked if there were any questions or discussion. Mr. Ortiz commended Mr. Snyder for his hard work, and Mr. Snyder thanked the Board.

Mrs. Leon made a motion to approve the financial report for December 2025.
Mr. Ortiz seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes - Clifton/Ortiz/Linares/Leon/Rittle; Nays - None

Under Courtesy of the Floor, Agenda Items Only - Nothing reported.

Under Old Business, Mrs. Clifton stated that the item had been carried over due to questions regarding the lease language but noted that she did not have the lease available in her current packet.

Attorney Matz explained that the lease is consistent with the Authority's other community center agreements, including requirements related to organizational documentation, 501(c)(3) status, and provisions for rent relief in exchange for community programming. He noted that the current arrangement remains month-to-month and that deferring action would not impact current operations.

The Board agreed to defer consideration of the Parkridge lease until the next meeting. Board members will submit questions via email in advance, which Attorney Matz will summarize for the record. A formal vote will be taken at the next board meeting

Under Chairperson report, Mrs. Clifton stated that she had no formal report and thanked the Board for its support over the past two years as she learned the role. She also expressed appreciation to Vice Chairperson Ortiz for stepping in during her absences and thanked both Mr. Ortiz and Chairperson Rittle for their willingness to continue serving. Board members expressed their thanks for Chairperson Clifton's service.

Under the Executive Director's report, in the absence of Mr. Ritter, Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Rivera reported that Mr. Ritter recently graduated from the Executive Director Program. She also reported that the Authority is continuing work on the Request for Submission Proposal (RSP) for the Project Based Voucher program, which is expected to be advertised by the end of January. Additionally, interviews are being conducted for the Family Development Office for both a manager and a clerk position. In addition, Ms. Rivera stated that the Drug and Criminal meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 14, at 9:00 a.m. in the Monocacy conference room.

Chairperson Clifton asked whether the Family Development interviews were for newly created positions or existing vacancies. Mrs. Rivera responded that the clerk's position is an existing vacancy and the manager position is being filled due to a retirement effective December 31. She clarified that both positions are located in the Family Development Office in Pembroke.

Under Committee Reports, Scholarship Committee, Ms. Moreno reported that Pennsylvania Housing Authority Pennsylvania Association of Housing & Re- Development Agency, PHADA is offering up to a \$12,000 scholarship opportunity to BHA tenants and that a mailing will be going out soon. Chairperson Rittle confirmed this information and expressed enthusiasm for the program, asking if this was a new offering, noting that in the past it was limited to BHA scholarship. Ms. Linares clarified that the scholarship has always been available to tenants.

Under Resident Advisory Board, Mr. Ortiz thanked Mrs. Clifton for her service. He reported that the Authority continues to provide food distribution twice per month through the Second Harvest program. He also thanked Mr. Ritter and his wife for Grace Church sponsoring gifts for twenty -five resident families, as well as the Chamber of Commerce, represented by Kathy Herrington, for sponsoring gifts for an additional 25 families. Mr. Ortiz noted that the baseball program will enter its fifth year on March 15 and highlighted its continued success, including participants attending college and being selected for minor league teams. He concluded by thanking the Board for its continued support.

UNDER RESOLUTIONS - APPROVING OF THE AUDIT REPORT FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2025.

Mr. Steven Kutsuflakis, Partner with Barbacane, Thornton & Company, presented the audit of the Authority's financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, accompanied by Ryan Mallow, who worked on the audit under his supervision. He reported that the audit was conducted remotely, with fieldwork completed in July and final reporting issued in November. The Authority received an unmodified (clean) opinion, indicating that the financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Mr. Kutsuflakis stated that the audit was performed in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and Government Auditing Standards, which include a review of internal controls and compliance with laws and regulations. He reported that no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal controls were identified. He noted that management is responsible for the financial statements and internal controls, while the auditors' responsibility is to express an opinion on the statements.

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Mr. Kutsuflakis summarized key financial highlights, noting that the Authority's net position increased from approximately \$14.0 million to \$14.3 million, an increase of approximately \$280,000. Cash and investments totaled approximately \$15.8 million as of March 31, 2025, with \$341,000 restricted for specific purposes. Overall revenues increased by approximately 9 percent from the prior year, while expenses increased by just over 6 percent, primarily due to higher maintenance costs and increased Housing Assistance Payments resulting from higher leasing activity.

Mr. Kutsuflakis also reported on the single audit of federal programs conducted in accordance with OMB Uniform Guidance. Total federal expenditures for the year were approximately \$14.8 million. The Capital Fund Program was selected as the major program for testing, and the Authority received an unmodified opinion on compliance, with no findings or internal control issues reported. He noted that HUD has already approved the audit and that all required submissions were made timely, including filing with the Federal Audit Clearinghouse.

Chairperson Rittle asked a clarifying question regarding a prior communication to the Board related to significant risk areas. Mr. Kutsuflakis explained that such disclosures are required under professional auditing standards and do not indicate any identified issues at the Authority.

Chairperson Rittle thanked the auditors for their presentation.

Mrs. Linares made a motion to approve the audit report fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.
Mrs. Leon seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes - Clifton/Ortiz/Linares/Leon/Rittle; Nays - None

Under New Business - Nothing reported.

Under Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business Board Member, nothing reported.

Under Public Comments, Mr. Gene Herrera, a contractor and long-time resident of Bethlehem's Southside, addressed the Board. He stated that he has lived in the community for over 20 years and emphasized the importance of safe, well-maintained housing and its impact on families, neighborhoods, and overall quality of life. Mr. Herrera expressed interest in submitting bids through Penn Bids and working on projects within the community. He noted his commitment to investing in local residents, creating job opportunities, and contributing to community development through quality workmanship and volunteer efforts. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak and expressed respect for the leadership and decision-making of the Authority.

Chairperson Rittle thanked Mr. Herrera for his comments and encouraged him to share his contact information with staff.

Chairperson Rittle noted that the next regular board meeting will be held on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 4:00 P.M., in the community room at Monocacy Tower. There being no further business to transact, Chairperson Rittle declared the meeting adjourned.

John Ritter
Executive Director