



# *Louisiana Housing Corporation*

**\*An audio-video recording as well as verbatim-transcript of these proceedings  
is available upon request by contacting the LHC\***

**LHC Board of Directors**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, August 11, 2021 @ 10:00 A.M.**

**2415 Quail Drive  
Executive Director's Conference Room, Baton Rouge, LA 70808**

**Board Members Participating (via GlobalMeet audio-video conference mode)**

Chairman Anthony P. Marullo, III  
Vice-Chairwoman Tonya P. Mabry  
Tony Ligi, Official Delegate for Louisiana State Treasurer John M. Schroder  
Johnny Berthelot  
Derrick Edwards  
Stacy S. Head  
Steven P. Jackson  
Ericka McIntyre  
Willie Rack  
Jennifer Vidrine  
Gillis R. Windham

**Board Members Absent**

None

**Staff Present (on-site at LHC Building)**

Barry E. Brooks  
Bradley Sweazy  
Yolanda Martin  
Nakesla Blount  
Lauren Holmes  
Gary Beadle  
Louis Russell  
Judy White

Carlos Dickerson

### **Others Present**

None: **Other LHC Staff and Members of the Public participated via Global-Meet audio-video mode.**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Board Chairman Anthony P. Marullo, III called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Board Secretary Barry E. Brooks called the roll; there was a quorum.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Next item discussed was the July 14, 2021 LHC Full Board of Directors Annual Meeting Minutes.

**On a motion by Board Member Willie Rack and seconded by Board Member Tony Ligi, the Minutes of the July 14, 2021 LHC Board of Directors Annual Meeting were unanimously approved, as distributed.**

Next item discussed was the July 22 – 23, 2021 LHC Board of Directors Board Orientation-Retreat Meeting.

**On a motion by Board Member Jennifer Vidrine and seconded by Board Member Willie Rack, the Minutes of the July 22 – 23, 2021 LHC Board of Directors Board Orientation-Retreat Meeting were unanimously approved, as distributed.**

### **BOARD CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chairman Marullo thanked everyone for participating, given the COVID-19 mitigation challenges.

### **LHC INTERIM-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

LHC IED Bradley R. Sweazy discussed the American Recovery Plan, upcoming HOME Funding, Coordinated Entry Process, recent travel to Shreveport, NCSHA Annual Conference in September, update on LHC Staff during COVID-19 challenges, Rural Bond Bundle, 4% HOME NOFA, LHC Staff trainings, etc.

## **LHC EXECUTIVE COUNSEL'S REPORT**

LHC Executive Counsel Yolanda Martin advised the Board that wherein necessary she would provide a monthly update on pending matters to the Board, and that she is always available to assist anyone.

### **AGENDA ITEM #7 – Emergency Rental Assistance Program (“ERAP”)**

Division of Administration Assistant Commissioner for Statewide Services Desiree' Honoré Thomas gave an informative Update (**document available upon request**) on the ERAP.

AC Thomas noted that there were 3K applications in 'case management' level; 1,200 applications in 'quality control' review, \$23,844,535.73 in approved payments; that there was a steady rise in applications and landlord participation given the upcoming end of the evictions moratorium; that 26K text messages had been sent out; that the LGUs have \$40M of \$59M disbursed to date; that there was a JLCB meeting at the Capitol on Fri Aug 13<sup>th</sup>, etc.

Board Member Steven P. Jackson noted the Caddo Parish may need more funding to pay for both rent arrears as well as past due utilities.

AC Thomas noted that ERAP could pay for three (3) months of rent forward to assist newly displaced tenants, but that the goal was to "...keep people housed where they are..."

Board Member Jackson applauded AC Thomas for her very informative and positive reports.

AC Thomas noted that ERAP is continuously assessed for ways to improve, and that Governor Edwards had recently sent a letter to US Treasury Secretary noting on-going delays due to some of the cumbersome Treasury guidelines.

AC Thomas also briefly discussed the Housing Assistance Fund, noting that such was progressing towards launch, that the HAF would pay for past due home mortgage payments, would average \$5K per applicant, and that KORN LLP is developing the framework for the State.

Vice-Chairwoman Mabry inquired as to the status of ERAP direct payments to tenants who have unresponsive or uncooperative landlords.

AC Thomas noted that mechanisms were in place to facilitate such situations, and that if a direct payment was made to the tenant and they did not use the funds to pay their rent that the applications would be subject to fraud investigation and eviction.

**AGENDA ITEM #8 – Resolution regarding LCG for Audit Engagement of GEs**

Next item discussed was the resolution regarding adopting the completed Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for Audit Engagements of Governmental Entities.

The matter was introduced by Secretary Brooks.

Additional information was provided by Carlos Dickerson, LHC Chief Financial Officer, noting that he and staff were recommending approval thereof.

**On a motion by Board Member Steven P. Jackson and seconded by Board Chairman Anthony P. Marullo, the resolution to adopt the completed Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for Audit Engagements of Governmental Entities, attached as Exhibit A; and providing for other matters in connection therewith, was moved to debate. There being no further discussion, opposition, or public comment, a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #9 – Resolution regarding LLA Performance Audit**

Next item discussed was the resolution executing an Engagement Agreement for a Performance Audit of the LHC Operational Policies and Procedures by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor.

The matter was introduced by Secretary Brooks.

Additional information was provided by Chairman Marullo, noting that he was recommending approval thereof.

Board Member Jackson noted his support for the matter, and that he was looking forward to the Report.

Chairman Marullo thanked IED Sweazy and EC Martin for their guidance and support of the matter.

Chairman Marullo noted that there would be no action on the Report once received without prior Board review and approval.

**On a motion by Board Member Designee Tony Ligi and seconded by Board Member Steven P. Jackson, the resolution authorizing the LHC to execute an Engagement Agreement for a Performance Audit of the LHC Operational Policies and Procedures by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor (“LLA”), labeled as Exhibit A; and providing for other matters in connection therewith, was moved to debate. There being no further discussion, opposition, or public comment, a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #10 – Resolution regarding 2022 LIHEAP Grant Application**

Next item discussed was the resolution regarding approving the Louisiana 2022 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Grant Application.

The matter was introduced by Secretary Brooks.

Additional information was provided by Lauren Holmes, LHC Energy Assistance Administrator, noting staff was recommending approval thereof.

**On a motion by Board Member Johnny Berthelot and seconded by Board Member Steven P. Jackson, the resolution approving the Louisiana 2022 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (“LIHEAP”) Grant Application (attached as “Exhibit A”); and providing for other matters in connection therewith, was moved to debate. There being no further discussion, opposition, or public comment, a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #11 – Resolution regarding River Trace Apartments**

Next item discussed was the resolution regarding a change in the site and property description for River Trace Apartments located in Sterlington, Louisiana.

The matter was introduced by Secretary Brooks.

Additional information was provided by Louis Russell, LHC Housing Development Administrator, noting staff was recommending approval thereof.

**On a motion by Board Member Steven P. Jackson and seconded by Board Member Gillis R. Windham, the resolution authorizing a change in the site and property description for River Trace Apartments located at 606 Harvey Avenue and the intersection of Frances Avenue and High Avenue, Sterlington, Ouachita Parish, Louisiana; authorizing the Corporation staff and counsel to prepare the forms of such documents and agreements as may be necessary; and providing for other matters in connection therewith, was moved to debate. There being no further discussion, opposition, or public comment, a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #12 – Resolution regarding amending the LHC Bylaws**

Next item discussed was the resolution regarding necessary amendments to the LHC Bylaws.

The matter was introduced by Secretary Brooks, noting that such was necessary due to changes reflective of SB 188, as related to the composition of the Board.

**On a motion by Board Member Delegate Tony Ligi and seconded by Board Member Willie Rack, the resolution approving amending the LHC Bylaws reflective of passage of SB 188, as related to the appointments of the Governor and the State Treasurer, during the 2021 Louisiana Regular Legislative Session; and providing for other matters in connection therewith, was moved to debate. There being no further discussion, opposition, or public comment, a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.**

**AGENDA ITEM #13 – Notice of Intent to Amend the LHC Bylaws**

Next item discussed was the Notice of Intent regarding a proposed amendment to the LHC Bylaws as related to the Standing Committees.

The matter was introduced by Secretary Brooks.

Additional information was provided by Chairman Marullo, noting that he was recommending approval thereof, as well as were IED Sweazy and EC Martin.

**AGENDA ITEM #14 – Resolution regarding the salary of IED Bradley R. Sweazy**

Next item discussed was the resolution regarding approving LHC Interim-Executive Director Bradley R. Sweazy's salary during the time he serves as IED.

The matter was introduced by Secretary Brooks.

Additional information was provided by Chairman Marullo, noting that he was recommending approval thereof, retroactive to June 15, 2021.

Chairman Marullo applauded IED Sweazy's community outreach and his new "sense of calm" and "change in culture" at LHC, and was well deserving of the salary increase.

Chairman Marullo also noted that he did not wish to "short change" IED Sweazy, and that the decision to approve the salary increase should be "data-driven".

Board Member Rack inquired as to why the matter was not retroactive to April 14<sup>th</sup>, as opposed to June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Marullo noted he was supportive of the date being April 14<sup>th</sup>.

Board Member Vidrine noted her support for the retroactive date of April 14<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Marullo noted he was awaiting analysis from LHC Human Resources Director Nakesla Blount related to “peer group data”.

Board Member Jackson moved to place the discussion in Executive Session to “...freely discuss and negotiate.” The matter FAILED due to lack of a Second.

Board Member Rack noted he did not wish to delay the matter any further, and was in support of a salary increase for IED Sweazy.

Board Member Jackson noted that IED Sweazy deserves “just compensation”.

Board Member Windham noted he too supports a pay raise for IED Sweazy.

Board Member Head inquired on why a matter related to compensation could not be discussed in Executive Session.

EC Martin discussed the levels of Executive Session exceptions, and that previous Board discussions related to a salary increase were not done in Executive Session.

Board Member Rack noted he supports a retroactive salary increase.

Board Member Vidrine noted that past discussions of salary increases were done in open meetings; and that she was supportive of a retroactive salary increase for IED Sweazy.

Board Member Edwards noted he supports “expediting” the matter.

Board Designee Ligi noted he supports IED Sweazy’s “excellent” performance, and that he concurs with Chairman Marullo that the decision needs more facts and further review; that he would support a retroactive increase; that he wants a Legal Opinion on whether it is okay to make the salary increase retroactive to April 2021; that given two (2) new Board Members are joining perhaps they may wish to comment on the matter too; and that he concurs with EC Martin that the matter is not able to be placed in Executive Session.

HR Director Blount advised the Board that retroactive pay was required, and that she was not aware of any legal impediments that forbade such; and, more specifically that State Civil Service allows for retroactive pay.

Board Chairman inquired if outside Legal Opinion was warranted in the matter.

Board Member Edwards noted he did not see the need for incurred costs related to seeking external counsel.

Board Member Rack noted he did not wish to be “...looking for any excuse to not do the right thing”.

Board Member Jackson noted he felt the matter was being “rushed”, and that there was not enough time given to make a decision.

EC Martin noted that she is at all times “...giving Opinions that are based on law....”

EC Martin discussed the protocols related to Open Meetings Law.

**On a motion by Board Member Jennifer Vidrine and seconded by Board Member Willie Rack, the Board moved approving the matter as related to a salary increase for Interim-Executive Director Bradley R. Sweazy, and to make the salary increase retroactive from June 15, 2021 to April 15, 2021; with a salary increase amount that is to be determined based on previous salary increases given to past LHC Interim-Executive Directors; and providing for other matters in connection therewith, was moved to debate. There being no further discussion, opposition, or public comment, a Roll Call Vote was taken, 5 Yes (Berthelot, Edwards, Rack, Vidrine, Windham) - 5 No (Marullo, Mabry, Ligi, Head, Jackson), 1 Absent (McIntyre); and the motion FAILED.**

Let the Record reflect, that Board Secretary Brooks, per directives from the Board, did make an attempt to reach Board Member McIntyre to ascertain if she was having technical difficulties since she had been participating in the proceedings prior to the vote, to no avail.

**On a motion by Board Member Designee Ligi and seconded by Board Member Steven P. Jackson, the Board moved to DEFER the matter as related to a salary increase for Interim-Executive Director Bradley R. Sweazy, to the September 8, 2021 Board Meeting to allow for further review thereof; and providing for other matters in connection therewith, was moved to debate. There being no further discussion, opposition, or public comment, a Roll Call Vote was taken; 5 Yes (Mabry, Ligi, Berthelot, Head, Jackson) - 4 No (Edwards, Rack, Vidrine, Windham), 1 Absent (McIntyre); and the motion PASSED.**

Thereafter, IED Sweazy noted that he was uncomfortable “...being the center of attention....” and that he would continue to go his job irrespective of what the Board decides.

Chairman Marullo extended an apology to everyone that no conclusion could be reached on the matter, and that “...I hope we can work diligently...to circulate the proper data and get this matter resolved at our next Board meeting.”

#### **AGENDA ITEM #15 – OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other matters to discuss, Board Chairman Anthony P. Marullo, III offered a motion for adjournment that was seconded by Board Member Steven P. Jackson. There being no discussion or opposition, the motion passed unanimously.

**The Full Board meeting adjourned at 12:34 p.m.**

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**Chairman**

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**Secretary**