

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL AND REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF  
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF EAST  
BATON ROUGE PARISH  
CENTRAL OFFICE, 4731 NORTH BOULEVARD  
Thursday, February 8, 2018 @ 12:00 PM**

The Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority of East Baton Rouge Parish convened in Regular Session on Thursday, February 8, 2018 at 12:00 PM in the Central Office, located at 4731 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Invocation: Commissioner Sterling

Pledge of Allegiance

**ROLL CALL:**

**Members Present:** Commissioner Chris Brown  
Commissioner Lamiesa Bonton  
Commissioner Tyra Sterling  
Commissioner Al Barron  
Commissioner Dianna Payton  
Commissioner Christopher Odinet

**Members Absent:** None.

**QUORUM PRESENT**

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:**

Commissioner Payton asked if there were any public comments to be made. None were voiced. Public comment period ended.

**AGENDA ITEM NUMBER 1: DISCUSSION OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITS OF THE EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2017.**

Mr. Murray stated that Commissioner Odinet had requested this agenda item. He reported that the audits were underway.

Commissioner Odinet asked who their audit firm was.

**Mr. Murray stated that it was Aprio, LLC which was a firm that had merged with Yeager & Boyd.**

**Commissioner Odinet asked how long Yeager & Boyd had been with the housing authority.**

**Mrs. Bayham stated that it had been around 11 or 12 years ago.**

**Commissioner Odinet expressed concern regarding having the same auditor for over a decade. There was some discussion regarding the length of their contract and when it would end.**

**Commissioner Payton asked if there were any other questions concerning the auditing firm. None were voiced. She summarized that Mrs. Bayham would confirm the exact information in the contract with Yeager & Boyd to be presented at the next meeting.**

**This concluded the discussion on this agenda item.**

## **AGENDA ITEM NUMBER 2: DISCUSSION ON THE LEGAL COUNSEL CONTRACT OF DECUIR, CLARK, AND ADAMS, LLC FOR THE EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH HOUSING AUTHORITY.**

**Commissioner Payton opened the discussion by stating that the information on the contract was in the board packets. She opened the floor for any questions or concerns to be discussed.**

**Commissioner Odinet requested to confirm that the hourly rate charged by their firm was aligned with the hourly rate charged by the attorney general for state contracts.**

**Mr. DeCuir stated that the rate they charged was actually lower than the attorney general and had been maintained in that place over the years. The rate was \$95 an hour lower than the current attorney general's rate.**

**Commissioner Odinet asked how often the firm submitted supplemental bills for work that might be considered over and above general baseline counsel duties. He assumed that they were doing that.**

**Mr. DeCuir stated that as a rule they did not submit any supplemental bills. The only reason they would have to do that would be for some of the projects handled with some of the developers; for instance, performing opinions that were required by the developer, but were not general practice.**

Commissioner Odinet asked what rate they were charging for development deals and assisting with those types of transactions on the Partners side .

Mr. DeCuir stated that legal arrangements on the Partners side was set by developers when they put together their budget so his flat fee on those was typically split with whomever the developer had for the designated counsel.

Commissioner Odinet asked if the current engagement included the work that they did for Partners or were they engaged separately by Partners.

Mr. DeCuir stated that they were only engaged by the housing authority and because it enveloped Partners then they did the work that Partners required.

Commissioner Odinet asked if there was separate accounting done for the legal work for Partners.

Mrs. Bayham answered that because the different programs were billed for services then they did keep the accounting separate for each program.

There was some discussion regarding the work that the firm did for Partners and the Housing Authority separately and the reason for them charging such a decreased hourly rate. The firm was not seeking an increase of hourly rate pay, but they did desire to continue to contract with the housing authority to provide services. A rate increase would be greatly appreciated, but not required.

Mr. Murray noted that the DeCuir, Clark, and Adams Law Firm billed the East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority and Partners Southeast on separate invoices for the two entities.

Motion was made by Commissioner Barron to increase the hourly rate for DeCuir, Clark, and Adams, LLC to the standard hourly rate of \$225 set by the attorney general's office and Commissioner Bonton seconded the motion. It was decided that the board would need to be presented with a new contract memorializing the rate increase and extension of their contract. The new contract once approved would make the old one null and void.

Commissioner Odinet asked Mr. Murray and Mrs. Bayham if they felt comfortable with adding this increase to the current budget.

Mrs. Bayham stated that she didn't see it having any impact on the budget at all.

Mr. Murray suggested that the housing authority could procure the services of DeCuir, Clark, and Adams, LLC through the end of the calendar year while simultaneously issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) advertisement for legal services.

Commissioner Odinet abstained from voting simply because he felt that occasionally they should cast the net so to speak and see what other providers were out there.

Mr. Murray stated that the DeCuir, Clark, and Adams, LLC was not just our legal counsel but also a good partner. He noted that the DeCuir, Clark, and Adams, Law Firm, along with other firms, was willing to reduce its legal fees on the River South project in order to fill a slight gap on the funding at closing.

Commissioner Payton did express that due to the transitional phase that they were in continuity of services was extremely important.

Commissioner Brown felt that they should not change something that was working.

No further discussion was made. One abstention was noted for Commissioner Odinet. Motion passed.

Chris Odinet left meeting.

### **AGENDA ITEM NUMBER 3: DISCUSSION ON THE REPOSITIONING OF THE EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH HOUSING AUTHORITY PUBLIC HOUSING PROPERTIES, ESPECIALLY TURNER PLAZA AND SHARLO TERRACE.**

Mr. Murray began the discussion. He stated that they were looking into vacating the properties in question and moving the residents into possibly Gardere or Ardenwood or an acquired rehabbed property. This was a current part of their strategy. Relocation would be Phase 1. Turner Plaza would be Phase 2 and Sharlo Terrace would be Phase 3. He then asked for the board input on still having Intregal on board to help them through this process. They were still under contract with their firm. He did say that he wanted Mr. Daniels to come and give them a presentation and highlights on the project. He turned the floor over to Mr. Daniels at this time.

Mr. Daniels stated that back in October 2017 they had presented their repositioning strategy to the board. Since that time and even prior to, they had commissioned various assessments to help them identify available tools to bring their goals to fruition.

Within that toolbox, they had RAD, CNI, tax credits, and other grant sources. They had categorized different properties and priorities. First priority was Ardenwood and CNI collaboration. Second in priority one, the CFFP which was a portion of the capital funds allowed them to redevelop Autumn and Willow. The third part of priority one was the repositioning of Turner and Sharlo. One of

the major facts about the properties were that the residents living there were disabled or elderly. Their hope was to separate the elderly and the younger disabled residents. The elderly would be relocated into the Cypress at Gardere property. The younger disabled would be repositioned to an acquired rehab property which they planned on identifying within the next six months. With this population came special needs that had to be catered to.

Mr. Daniels continued his presentation. He stated that there were multiple tracks that were moving along which would directly impact the success of this particular strategy. Identifying the property and identifying the broker that identified the property were first and with those things there would need to be an extension to Intregal's existing contract. The timing would need to be discussed. It was well known that there were concerns with Intregal, but there was a new representative coming and he would be coming to a meeting in the future to meet everyone.

Motion was made by Commissioner Barron to approve and Commissioner Sterling seconded the motion. No further discussion was made, and no opposition was noted.

This concluded the discussion on this agenda item.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NUMBER 4: PRESENTATION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT.**

Mr. Murray presented his report. He mentioned the upcoming 2018 NAHRO Legislative Conference in DC, April 21 – 25, 2018. It was discussed which board members would be attending. He also stated at the request of some of the commissioners he would be getting the information on the board certification for those who would be attending.

All Board members noted that they were interested in attending the 2018 NAHRO Legislative Conference in DC, April 21 – 25, 2018, except Christopher Odinet.

He updated the board on the public relations and media search. They had two respondents, Franklin and Associates and Otey White and Associates. The pricing of Otey White and Associates was more in their range.

The next scheduled meeting would be March 8<sup>th</sup>. This concluded the presentation of the chief executive officer's report.

At this time, Commissioner Payton adjourned the meeting.

**MEETING ADJOURNED.**

**APPROVED:**



**Dianna Payton  
Chair**



**Richard L. Murray  
Chief Executive Officer**