

# REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HARRISBURG

## Regularly Scheduled Meeting December 16, 2025 - 12:32 P.M.

The Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Harrisburg held a Regularly Scheduled Meeting on December 16, 2025, in Suite 405, Conference Room of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Government Center, 10 North Second Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, at 12:32 p.m. Chaired by Nichole Johnson.

### HRA BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT and/or via TEAMS Web-based Video Conferencing

Nichole Johnson  
Crystal Brown Via TEAMS  
Alexander Reber

### ABSENT:

N/A

Also present: Janell Weaser, Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Controller, Bryan Davis, HRA Executive Director, Catherine Rowe, HRA Solicitor and Jacob Toth with Ms. Rowe's office.

PUBLIC PRESENT: None.

### MINUTES

The minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 18, 2025, was presented for approval. Mr. Reber moved to approve, seconded by Ms. Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

### TREASURERS REPORT

The Treasurer's Report for August and September 2025 were presented for approval; the report for October 2025 was presented for review. Mr. Reber moved to approve, seconded by Ms. Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

### COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Davis announced that things are moving along with the Swatara Street Park. Ann Yost is finalizing the construction bid documents and uploading them to DCNR's portal for their review and approval.

Mr. Davis said another item that went out today is for the \$712,000 of FEMA funds. That bid went out for advertisement this morning.. This will get us to 30% drawings for the Paxton Creek De-channelization. Because of the Holidays we set the due date for January 30<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Davis mentioned the Riverside Firehouse. The City is finalizing the deed to the Authority right now. When we take title to that, there will be a bit of work with the Planning Bureau to consolidate the parcels. Then that can go out for bid.

Mr. Davis said he meets with the Mayor every week. He keeps her in the loop of things. She helps with pushing city staff to get things moving.

Mr. Davis reported that the City Council passed their budget last night. HRA's part of the budget was included in that.

Mr. Davis said he and Ms. Rowe have another subject they wish to talk about with the board members.

Ms. Rowe relayed that downtown has been a point of conversation at the City level as well as publicly in the press. She and Mr. Davis were encouraged to talk to the Redevelopment Authority and Land Bank

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Board Members to engage with the public and get a feel for what kind of development they would like downtown, and see what opportunities might be available to improve the community. And for the Redevelopment Authority to work with the Land Bank to acquire some funds that can be put into downtown properties, and if there are other properties in the city that the authority wants to focus on as well.

Ms. Rowe said she wanted to bring that up to the board to see if there were any initial thoughts or consideration, but mostly to invite them to have these conversations over the holidays and once we get into 2026, and reorganize and think about the future, to focus on that.

Ms. Johnson inquired about what vacant properties are available downtown.

Ms. Rowe replied, saying that is a bit of a challenge because there is a great deal of currently owned properties that are not presently occupied. Some steps need to happen before the Authority could potentially take ownership. City Codes would need to be involved to deem a property unfit for habitation. Property owners would need to work with the City and help come up with ideas as a collective.

Ms. Rowe said the Authority can only take title to blighted properties, or through tax sales, or through amicable purchase.

Mr. Reber said we need the Vacant Property Reinvestment Board reinvigorated again.

Ms. Rowe agreed. The Vacant Property Reinvestment Board could conduct its due process with the landowners. The landowners can say it is not worth it for me to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to make it habitable. And then we end up stuck with difficult properties needing to work with investors on the back end.

Mr. Reber inquired with Mr. Davis if the Authority has any inventory or any property in the downtown district.

Mr. Davis said we do own land that is a part of the train station. The best way for him to describe the location is where the bus stops are on the corner beside the church at 4<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets.

Mr. Reber asked if Amtrak has an interest in that.

Mr. Davis said we have discussed that with them. They have an interest in acquiring that from us as part of their site.

Mr. Davis said in past years, we looked at redevelopment plan possibilities around the train station and picking up land around what we currently own. The concept is called TOD, Transit Oriented Development.

Mr. Reber asked if Greyhound stayed at the train station.

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Mr. Davis was not sure.

Mr. Davis said he is not aware of any vacant properties downtown being on the Dauphin County Tax Sale.

Mr. Davis explained that first, there is an Upset Sale, and if not sold there, the properties are then placed on the Judicial Sale. The Land Bank has first right to acquire any of those at the auctions. We look at the Judicial Sales. Or if a property is listed on the market for sale. We can negotiate a price.

Mr. Davis explained to the Board Members the Vacant Property Reinvestment Board's process. That is a statutory process which results in quiet title. Any property going through that process must be vacant and blighted. This could mean the property is delinquent on taxes and in blighted condition. Or unpaid utilities; that is a blighted property.

Mr. Reber mentioned the property called AFL-CIO on the 600 block of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, close to the river. They had gotten a redevelopment plan through, but then they did nothing. Each day, he walks by this property and wonders if it will collapse. He prays that no one is sleeping underneath it. You can see that some of the boards have broken on the support. He worries that a homeless person will take shelter there, and it collapse down on them.

Mr. Davis said this creates a candidate site for the Vacant Property Reinvestment Board. They could start their actions, which gives them leverage to get the person to actually complete their improvements and bring things up to code. The end result does not always mean we acquire ownership.

Mr. Reber added, or we purchase it, get some grant money, demolish it, and then re-market it as a vacant site, which is more attractive than a building that is sitting there decaying.

Mr. Reber informed that the Dauphin County Land Bank has done several of these projects.

Mr. Davis said our model includes partnerships. Several times, our Land Bank has taken title for a non-profit like Tri-County Housing who has done the work. They applied for the grants, they lined up the contractors and then found a new buyer.

Mr. Davis shared that Urban Renewal Plans are a statutory vehicle in the Commonwealth established for redevelopment authorities in Pennsylvania. They can lay out a plan with distinct boundaries and say we have a vision for these blocks; this area that has prescribed steps. It must go before the City Council and through public meetings. The Mayor needs to sign off on it. Then, after all those steps, we can use our declaration of taking for occupied units as well. He gave an example of the 1972 flood. There were two urban renewal plans. One was for downtown, and the other was for Midtown. This sets the boundaries for all the real estate within that plan and any available funds we could acquire, occupied in addition to vacant land. He said an urban renewal plan has not been adopted since he has been here, but it is a tool that was heavily used after the 1972 flood.

Ms. Rowe said that it was a natural disaster. We are seeing cities start to adopt those plans for post COVID relief, with vacancies or vacancy issues in downtown redevelopments. Pittsburgh is one that put in place an urban renewal plan.

Ms. Johson wondered about the Dauphin County Tax and the Judicial Sales. She asked if they were the same thing.

Mr. Davis explained that the similarity is that the properties for sale have unpaid real estate taxes that are auctioned off for sale. First in the fall is the upset tax sale. This includes all liens and encumbrances. If a property is not sold here, then it goes to the Judicial Sale that coming spring. The Judicial Sale comes with a court order that discharges all liens and encumbrances.

Mr. Reber asked if there are any grant funds available that we can go for to get a pre-emptive pool of money to do some of this work.

Ms. Row said not without a plan. Grant money is hard to come by these days. First, you need to put a plan together.

Mr. Reber mentioned Pittsburgh used a lot of ARPA funds to do this. That is how they were able to jumpstart their redevelopment authority, which is what I am hoping can happen here to give a pool of money to draw from. His question is whether we can use other partners to work together on this, but is there any proactive step we can take in terms of securing funding for doing the work.

Ms. Rowe's recommendation would be to come up with a consensus on what the goal is as a board and then start the outreach, communicating with partners, that kind of proactive, actual steps. Again, there are some necessary legal protections on property before we can do anything. But in order to plan for a year, five years, or ten years down the road, there has to be some vision of what the Redevelopment Authority focuses on. There are different neighborhood-specific theories, which is why I specifically mentioned downtown. One type of theory is housing. Again, that is ultimately up to the authority, the authority board, to decide what the goal is.

Ms. Rowe said the reason I am raising this in context is that there has been some fire in the conversation, and the authority does have some weight to be able to use its leverage and contact work with partners. We cannot take property unless we have a plan. The first step is talking about goals and what the plan is for the future.

Mr. Davis said he will do as much as he can to influence or inform the City in the policy-making. They have access to federal funding that comes in every year. He wondered if the city paid off its Section 108 loans.

Ms. Rowe said she doubts it.

Mr. Davis said they should be coming to the end of that soon, as that frees up more because a large chunk of that went to pay off loans that the city had taken out against the CDBG funds and everybody has their sights on that pot of money especially for public safety, community centers, and affordable housing development. The competition for funds is fierce.

Mr. Davis mentioned that PHFA money is increasing for fair housing. And with RACP you can only be reimbursed 30% for acquisition. So, if we spent \$1,000,000, you would only be reimbursed \$300,000. We would have to find the other \$700,000 to buy a building.

Mr. Reber agreed. He pointed out a DCNR example. DCNR will give a grant of \$10,000 or \$20,000 to do a study for a park system to create a master plan that you can use to inform a conversation to get grants for other things. There are other pots of money like that. We could try with them and see if we could get \$10,000 or \$20,000. That would give us the ability to leverage more funds.

Mr. Reber inquired if there was a successful model from the Redevelopment Authority or elsewhere in Pennsylvania that has done something similar that we could copy for a starting point. Plus, we want to make sure the city will partner with us.

Mr. Reber conveyed that CREDC is doing work downtown. He is on the executive committee at CREDC. They are looking to do some contracting downtown. This could be a good opportunity to have conversations because the legislative delegation has gotten some money for that.

Mr. Reber said he is more than happy to open up those lines of communication.

Ms. Rowe commented that work has been delayed.

Mr. Reber responded that work was supposed to begin already, but was delayed due to the state budget. The money was there in the budget.

Ms. Johnson agreed. We should talk with other people to see who will partner with us to do something. Perhaps some type of housing or with children. She will give it some thought.

Ms. Brown also agreed. She is excited to hear that others are invested and seeing the urgency around downtown because, like Harristown Development Corporation, they have been doing a lot of work trying to figure out how to bring in more housing.

Ms. Brown said she is interested in seeing what this could look like. She wonders what it will look like for us to do a plan and what money we can come up with together to build something; what the plan will be, and for future discussions at the board meetings.

Ms. Rowe said she and Mr. Davis will talk more about what that would practically look like and come back to the board and say these are the kind of steps we want you to think about taking. For now, it was if there is desire, any interest on behalf of the Board to start looking forward, and one thing I'll note is that last year there was a lot of cleanup that the Board was doing and that the Authority was doing with the transportation center and dealing with Harristown and Governors Square. That is all good progress. Now we can move forward. Mr. Davis and I can come back in January with some thoughts.

Mr. Davis agreed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

RESOLUTION NO. 33-2025 – Approving the Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority Board meeting dates, place, and time for the 12-month period beginning January 2026. Mr. Reber moved to approve providing some correction are made to say the year 2026 instead of 2025, seconded by Ms. Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 34-2025 – Authorizing the Authority to approve the General Operating Budget for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2026, in the approximate amount of \$657,581. Mr. Reber moved to approve, seconded by Ms. Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Meeting was adjourned at 1:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary/Assistant Secretary