

MINUTES... REGULAR MEETING... APRIL 13, 2026

The members of the Bethlehem Housing Authority met in a regular session on April 13, at 4:00 P.M. (IN PERSON MEETING). Those present and absent were as follows

PRESENT

Mr. John Marc Rittle, Chairperson
Mrs. Lindsey Clifton
Mrs. Iris Linares

ABSENT

Mr. Rogelio Ortiz, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Rachel Leon

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

Chairperson Rittle presented the Minutes of the **Regular Meeting** of March 9, 2026, were presented and approve. Mrs. Linares made a motion to accept the minutes of March 9, 2026. Mrs. Clifton seconded the motion.

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

Chairperson Rittle presented the Treasurer’s report for March 2026.

Mrs. Clifton made a motion to approve the treasurer’s report for March 2026.
Mrs. Linares seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes – Rittle/Clifton/Linares; Nays – None

Chairperson Rittle presented the financial report and Section 8 Utilization report.

Mr. Snyder reported that cash and investments remain strong. The Operating Fund currently holds approximately \$788,000, of which an estimated \$450,000–\$470,000 is due back to HUD, pending audit confirmation. These funds are primarily held in money market accounts, with interest from CDs deposited regularly. A wire transfer to HUD will be completed later this year once figures are finalized. HUD will implement a 2026 requirement to justify subsidy drawdowns, with unused funds subject to return after seven years. There are no plans to apply this retroactively to 2025, and current reserves will remain available for operational needs, including deficit coverage. CD rates are declining, with minimal impact on strategy.

Financially, the Authority remains stable. Recent increases in utility costs due to a lapsed contract have been addressed. New gas rates, effective April 1, are approximately one-third of prior costs and are secured through October. Electric rates are locked in for 18 months at just under \$0.11/kWh.

For Section 8, 394 units were leased in April, with approximately \$250,000 in remaining available funding. Leasing will be managed carefully to maximize utilization while minimizing the risk of future funding shortfalls or recapture by HUD.

Mrs. Clifton made a motion to approve the financial and Section 8 report.
Mrs. Linares seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes – Rittle/Clifton/Linares Nays – None

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

Under Old Business, the Parkridge Mrs. Clifton inquired whether a Certificate of Insurance naming the Housing Authority had been received and raised concerns regarding lease language referencing “faith-based activities.” She requested clarification on how the language was determined, given the Authority’s status as a federally funded entity.

Attorney Matz explained that the language reflects the tenant’s stated activities and was included for transparency. He noted that such activities are permissible provided they are open to all and do not constitute discrimination. He acknowledged potential concerns and stated the lease is month-to-month and can be revised if needed.

Mrs. Clifton expressed comfort with the lease, provided that any tenant marketing materials clearly distinguish the organization from the Housing Authority to avoid any perceived endorsement.

Mr. Rittle agreed with the concern, noting the language could imply the Authority is promoting faith-based activities rather than permitting their use of space. He supported clarifying the wording. The Board agreed to amend the lease by removing the reference to “Christian faith-based” activities to ensure neutrality and avoid the appearance of endorsement.

**Mrs. Clifton made a motion to approve the Parkridge Lease.
Mrs. Linares seconded the motion.**

Roll Call: Ayes – Rittle/Clifton/Linares Nays – None

Under the Chairperson’s Report, Mr. Rittle reported that, although not legally required, the Board typically conducts an annual review of the Executive Director. He noted that the review has not yet been completed but is expected to take place this year.

Under the Executive Director’s report, Mr. Ritter reported that the scheduled NSPIRE inspection did not occur, as had been previously canceled and not properly rescheduled. He noted that the inspection has now been rescheduled for May 13. At the request of Mr. Rittle, Mr. Ritter explained that NSPIRE is a physical inspection of Authority properties, including Pembroke, Fairmount, and Bayard.

Mr. Ritter also reported that a new Family Development Office Manager, Celinette Severino, began on March 16 and is performing well. Additionally, a new Tenant Selection Clerk, Nelisa Guerrero, has been hired.

Under Deputy Executive Director report, Ms. Rivera reported that the next Drug and Criminal Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 15 at the 4th Floor Conference Room.

Under Committee Reports, Scholarship Committee, Mrs. Linares reported that high school senior applications are due Monday, April 20, and 8th-grade applications are due Monday, April 27. She noted that no applications have been received to date. Mr. Rittle inquired about the application process and how applicants are notified. Ms. Moreno stated that the Bethlehem Area School District provides her with a list of graduating seniors and 8th-grade students. Ms. Linares added that applications are mailed to the students. Discussion followed regarding the lack of submissions at this time, and it was noted that this is typical and that applicants have been properly notified.

Resident Council – Nothing to report.

UNDER RESOLUTIONS - APPROVING OF THE CONTRACTS FOR GRASS CUTTING.

Three contractors were awarded grass cutting services, work is divided among Mason Landscaping (current contractor for approximately 10 years), Atlantic Property Maintenance (new contractor servicing Pembroke, Pfeifle, Fairmount, and Bayard), and Pennsylvania Lawn Services (servicing Lynfield, Parkridge, and the Monocacy bank area, including front and rear; serviced twice annually). Mr. Rittle inquired if Atlantic was a new vendor. Mr. Ritter confirmed and stated the Authority is pursuing cost savings through multiple bids, noting Mason Landscaping has provided satisfactory service but additional bidding improves pricing. Mr. Rittle asked if Mason previously covered all sites. Mr. Ritter confirmed they did under a two-year contract.

Mrs. Clifton made a motion to approve the grass cutting contracts.
Mrs. Linares seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes – Rittle/Clifton/Linares; Nays – None

APPROVING THE CONTRACT FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF ROOFS ON 27 UNITS.

Mrs. Clifton made a motion to approve the contract for the replacement of roofs on 27 units.
Mrs. Linares seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes – Rittle/Clifton/Linares; Nays – None

APPROVING OF THE CONTRACT FOR TENANT RELOCATON AND MOVING SERVICES.

Ms. Clifton inquired about the number of moves covered under the contract. Ms. Speshok explained that the contract includes multiple move types based on unit size, ranging from studios to four-bedroom units, and includes packing materials and services.

Mr. Rittle asked whether Adam Meyer had performed the work within the last two years. Ms. Speshok confirmed that O'Brian Glose was the prior vendor and Adam Meyer had not performed the contract during that period. Adam Meyer has previously performed other Authority contracts.

Mrs. Clifton made a motion to approve the contract for tenant relocation and moving services.
Mrs. Linares seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes – Rittle/Clifton/Linares; Nays – None

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APPROVING OF THE WRITE OFF FOR VACATED TENANTS ACCOUNTS.

Mrs. Linares made a motion to approve.
Mrs. Clifton seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes – Rittle/Clifton/Linares; Nays – None

APPROVING OF THE AMENDED 2024 CAPITAL FUND PLAN.

Mr. Rittle requested clarification regarding the budget revisions. Mr. Speshok explained that adjustments were made based on 2023 project costs, with some items exceeding original estimates. He noted that certain funds were amended to complete remaining work, including the elevator contract, with some costs carried into the 2024 budget. Mr. Rittle confirmed that the “revised” column reflects updated totals, not cumulative amounts. Mr. Speshok affirmed. Regarding specific line items, including the absence of revised figures for certain projects. Mr. Speshok indicated he would review those items and noted that a portion of funding was reallocated to the 2024 budget, including remaining elevator contract costs.

Mrs. Clifton made a motion to approve the amended 2024 Capital Fund Plan.
Mrs. Linares seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Ayes – Rittle/Clifton/Linares; Nays – None

Under New Business and Miscellaneous Reports and Other Reports from Board Members, Solicitor and Staff - Nothing reported.

Under Public Comments, Mia Reyes, BHA Marketing and Events Coordinator, presented a request to allow Central Assembly to participate in the upcoming Back-to-School Carnival. She noted the organization has historically provided significant donations, including bookbags, school supplies, groceries, and gift cards, which benefit residents. She also highlighted rising school supply costs and the importance of community partnerships in supporting families.

Mrs. Clifton clarified that the Board has not prohibited partnerships with faith-based organizations but emphasized the need for such participation to remain strictly secular. She stated that while volunteering, donations, and event support are acceptable, any form of religious promotion or distribution of faith-based materials is not permitted due to the Authority’s obligations as a federally funded entity. Mr. Rittle added that formal Board approval is not required, provided the partnership adheres to these guidelines.

Chairperson Rittle noted that the next regular board meeting will be held on Monday, May 11, 2026 at 4:00 P.M., in the community room at Monocacy Tower. There being no further business to transact, Vice Chairperson Rittle declared the meeting adjourned.

John Ritter
Executive Director