**Commissioner, Brattleboro Housing Partnerships**

**(a d/b/a of the Brattleboro Housing Authority)**

The Brattleboro Housing Authority was established in 1962 by action of the Brattleboro Select Board. It was the second Housing Authority established in Vermont under Federal enabling statutes. In 2015, Brattleboro Housing Partnerships (BHP) became the doing business as d/b/a for the Authority.

The Commissioner joins a five-member Board with each member appointed by the Brattleboro Select Board for a five-year term.

The Board of Commissioners meets monthly on a Monday night at 4:30 p.m, additional meetings are infrequent. The Board has a Chair, Vice- Chair and Secretary who are elected at the Annual Meeting held in November. BHP is a quasi-governmental agency and is not a non-profit 501(c)3. It is governed at the State level by the Vermont Public Meetings Law and other Vermont statutes pertaining to municipal entities and the regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The role of the Board of Commissioners is to provide governance, strategic guidance and implement policies that are in alignment with the mission, values and goals of the agency and are articulated in the 5-year plan adopted in 2021:

**Mission Statement**

*It is the Mission of the Brattleboro Housing Partnerships to ensure the provision of quality low income and affordable housing within viable communities to support independence and create opportunity.*

**Our Values:**

* Open and honest communication, respectfulness, integrity, fairness, and responsibility.
* We value each individual who participates in our programs.
* We believe strongly in community, thus it is the collective well-being of each neighborhood that is of paramount importance in our deliberations and decision-making.

**Strategic Plan 2022- 2027**

**#1 Strengthen BHP neighborhoods.**

BHP aims to facilitate a sense of pride, safety, and community for its residents. To do so, BHP will focus on improving the interior and exterior condition of its properties and increasing positive resident engagement through resident-selected activities, education, and volunteer opportunities.

1. Improve condition and aesthetics of BHP properties.
	* Solidify capital improvement plan for BHP properties with prioritized short-term and long-term projects for each property and identification of potential revenue sources.
	* Secure funding to enhance property amenities including additional play structures, community spaces, and laundry facilities.
	* Develop organizational plan to address chronic issues of smoking, trash, and resident conflict.
2. Increase resident engagement to develop sense of safety, belonging, and community.
	* Evaluate potential programming opportunities using resident feedback.
	* Develop staffing structure for increased family site presence and engagement.
	* Offer programming to include:
		+ Education/activity classes for residents (skills: budgeting, CPR, parenting; issues: public health, homelessness; and wellness activities).
		+ Mediation services for resident conflict.
		+ Onsite and collaborative programs for children and youth.
		+ Volunteer opportunities.
	* Increase participation from every property on the Resident Advisory and Communication Committee.

**#2 Increase housing units in Brattleboro.**

Brattleboro is in the midst of an escalating housing crisis with constricted conditions throughout the housing continuum, and a particular shortage of affordable housing for lower-income households. BHP has the opportunity to contribute to the development of new housing units in the community by pursuing re-development of three properties: Melrose Terrace, Moore Court, and Hayes Court. In-town, developable parcels are increasingly rare and both of these properties offer opportunity to create new housing units. The concurrent development of the properties merits exploration. While re-development of these properties is a priority, BHP will also pursue partnerships that create new housing with voucher availability and that create housing opportunities with services for aging community residents and/or other specific populations with unmet housing needs.

1. Explore replacement of housing units.
	* Complete Melrose Terrace Flood Mitigation project and evaluate final determination of change to flood map lines.
	* Conduct feasibility study focused on Melrose Terrace, Moore Court, and Hayes Court with the consideration of using Melrose Terrace as transitional units for other re-development projects, expanding Moore Court with mixed-income new and rehabbed units, and creating permanent housing at Melrose Terrace in the future.
	* Pursue selected housing development project as determined by feasibility study.
2. Consider other housing development partnerships to create additional Housing Choice voucher opportunities in the community.
3. Continue advocacy and involvement in expanding options for low-income housing with a focus on: housing with supportive services for aging in place; youth and people aging out of foster care; permanent supportive housing; and recovery housing.

**#3 Foster resident, organizational, and community resilience.**

Windham County’s demographics trends reflect an aging population. Extreme weather events and global crisis are more frequent. BHP staff—the backbone of the organization—must grapple with these challenges, while also supporting residents who have experienced trauma, discrimination, and the impacts of generational poverty. Over the next five years, BHP will focus on efforts that foster resident, neighborhood, and organizational resilience.

1. Support the safety and health of community residents.
	* Expand the Support and Services at Home (SASH) program’s services, geography, and eligibility.
	* Pursue opportunities to develop housing with increased services for residents who can no longer live independently.
2. Pursue energy efficiency upgrades for all BHP properties.
3. Strengthen emergency preparedness efforts.
	* Develop resident information infrastructure.
		+ Install Wi-Fi in all properties.
		+ Connect residents with needed electronic communication devices.
		+ Create and record resident disaster plans to include “buddy system”, plans for pets, and contact list in database.
4. Provide staff training to deepen understanding of residents and prevent professional burnout.
	* Provide staff training related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
	* Provide staff training related to generational poverty and trauma-informed practices.

**#4 Align programs and operations with Moving to Work opportunities.**

BHP’s shift to a Moving to Work organization creates opportunities to simplify complex processes, approach situations and challenges with more flexibility, and support residents’ self-determined goals. Over the next five years, BHP will explore the opportunities afforded by the Moving to Work shift with a focus on better addressing the needs and housing goals of BHP residents.

1. Analyze and re-organize staffing structure to support MTW and address the following:
	* Establish staffing for family site engagement and volunteer coordination.
	* Increase property management/occupancy administrative capacity.
	* Re-envision all BHP staff roles.
	* Decrease direct reporting to Executive Director by establishing Operations (Occupancy including Section 8, Finance, Maintenance) and Wellness & Services (SASH, Resident Services & Activities) departments with director-level staff members.
2. Prioritize initiatives that reinforce resident self-determination in their housing future.
	* Provide resident education to include financial literacy and homebuyer education.
	* Pursue education and incentive programs that connect residents to alternative homeownership strategies like homeownership vouchers and multi-family investments.
3. Simplify processes to reduce administrative and financial burdens.
	* Develop plan for income-earning young adults to avoid disincentivizing situations.
	* Move annual certifications to three years.
	* Increase self-certified assets cap.
	* Streamline property-specific applications.
	* Conduct comprehensive survey of residents and community partners to determine further changes.

**#5 Create organizational and community leadership opportunities**

BHP’s assets include its staff members and Commissioners. Over the next five years, BHP will strengthen the internal connections between Board and staff, and also create opportunities for the organization’s leaders to have a stronger external, community focus in their roles.

1. Charge Commissioners with re-establishing Brattleboro Housing Opportunities Inc. (BHOI) as vehicle for fundraising, volunteering, and outreach.
	* Identify Commissioner(s) committed to re-establishing BHOI.
	* Recruit additional Board members.
	* Develop mission and key initiatives to pursue.
2. Create regular opportunities for Commissioner and staff education and connection.
	* Incorporate regular program staff presence at Commissioner meetings
	* Hold quarterly Commissioner-staff “Lunch & Learns.”
3. Use staff re-organization to create Executive Director capacity for focus on long-term organizational goals and community leadership, including housing advocacy and community collaborations.
	* Develop and implement staffing re-organization project.
	* Review Executive Director job description to re-align with adjusted staffing and emphasize external and long-term responsibilities.

**To apply: Applications are available on the Town of Brattleboro website.** **Please contact Jessica Sticklor at the Town Manager’s office or Elizabeth Harrison, Chair, BHP Board of Commissioners** eharrison.nes@gmail.com  **for more information.**