

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Chairman

Carlos Gant
Tyra Fair
Roberta Swann
Ellis Foster, Jr.
Sydney King



TDD/TTY 1-800-545-1833, EXTENSION 824

www.mobilehousing.org

Michael E. Pierce

CEO

mpierce@mobilehousing.org

July 11, 2024

Board of Commissioners and Team MHA,

Good morning and Happy Thursday! The last few weeks have been extremely productive so it's imperative we maintain that momentum throughout the year.

Admittedly, I struggled mightily composing this letter because it's painful and frustrating to sit silently while our collective personal and professional reputations are maliciously and joyfully set ablaze by local politicians cognizant of the agency's true condition. At a minimum they should be required to inform the public why their extremely negative portrayals of the agency's CEO, Board of Commissioners and overall performance should be believed over that of the HUD Birmingham Field Office. When politicians weaponize their offices and city government against citizens with whom they disagree or dislike, the targeted citizens must resist their abuse of office and power with every fiber of their being. Otherwise, we shouldn't complain when they without hesitation make it abundantly clear criticism and/or failure to meet their demands will not be tolerated but dealt with swiftly via public shaming aimed at ruining your reputation, current and future job prospects.

When I arrived five years ago, the agency was essentially dead and destined for HUD receivership. During our initial agency meeting, I shared what I believed to be the five keys to our success. With visible skepticism in your eyes and body language, you listened intently when I said, "Success begins in the imagination and manifests itself when failure truly isn't an option. Therefore, we must:

- (1) Master each moment. Life is like a vapor in that we're here today and gone tomorrow, so take maximum advantage of the moments entrusted to you.
- (2) Anticipate adversity. Don't be surprised by it but expect it. Life is an endless series of ups/downs, ins/outs, peaks/valleys. In our thankless business, we must learn to dance in the rain instead of resenting it.
- (3) Develop strong convictions. Staying true to our convictions of what MHA should be will lead to adulation or ridicule. Regardless, we shouldn't vacillate between two opinions. We're a public housing agency and we must operate accordingly.
- (4) Expect to win. Visualize your success and work tirelessly to bring it to fruition. It has been aptly stated, "To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe. As you think, so shall you be."
- (5) Inspire others. Recognize a tenants encounter with you may be the only positive experience they will have that day. Be an encourager not a critic.

With no guarantee of the outcome, you accepted me although I lacked HUD experience and my tough but fair leadership style. Was it worth it? Absolutely, because we didn't simply rise to the occasion, we owned it! Now, members of our executive team, Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrators Paul and Magdalene Watkins, Chief Asset Officer Casey Dickinson and I are being featured by HUD as Best Practices presenters to Public Housing Authorities serving low-income tenants in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky,

Street Address:

151 South Claiborne Street
Mobile, Alabama 36602

Mailing Address:

Post Office Box 1345
Mobile Alabama 36633-1345

Telephone: (251) 434-2201
EFax: (251) 287-8244

Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico/U.S. Virgin Islands, South Carolina, and Tennessee. During these in person conferences or online meetings, we articulate granular level details and the analysis we used during our decision-making processes. HUD has highlighted and allowed our executives to share insights on important topics such as: (1) Housing Choice Voucher Program Administration; (2) Low-Income Public Housing Innovative Strategies to Increasing Occupancy; and (3) Understanding Section 18 Demolition, Disposition and Voluntary Compliance Processes. Earlier this year I represented the agency on a panel of three on the latter topic during HUDs PIH Southeast Network Public Housing Conference in Nashville, TN March 19-21, 2024, (see attached Day 1 afternoon agenda). Yet, despite our innovative approach to problem solving that HUD deems refreshing and worthy of illumination and imitation across the public housing landscape, we have inexplicably drawn the ire of Mayor Stimpson, select council members and administration staff; hereafter referred to as the city.

Disappointingly, the city has been secretly conspiring with two of the agency's staunchest critics over the past 24-36 months. Consequently, the public has been witnessing their carefully crafted attacks on me, the Board and agency. One of those critics, Laurie Hunter, is the aunt or cousin of Council William Carroll. Up to this point, both have failed to responsibly and publicly disclose their kinship. Why does it matter? Because approximately 18 months ago, Laurie was too willing to let fellow residents of Downtown Renaissance in on a secret, "Big Changes Are Coming to MHA. Mayor Stimpson doesn't like Mr. Pierce and will soon instruct the Board of Commissioners to fire him." When speaking with her on another matter at the development, I queried her about the statements, and she denied having said any such thing. The other outspoken critic, Estella Trotter, has been at odds with MHA for 10 plus years. Due to my five-year tenure, I cannot comment on the validity of the challenges she had with the agency prior to my arrival, but I can say the Recovery Agreement confirms living conditions at the developments were unacceptable. Ultimately, HUD investigated tenant complaints and eventually agreed the units weren't fit for habitation, ordered their demolition while providing impacted tenants the option to move to a different public housing development or receive a Tenant Protection Voucher to locate housing in the private market. So, one would expect impacted tenants to feel good about their hard-fought victory while preparing to move out and on to better living conditions, right? Yes, but not Estella and therein lies the problem. She complains loudly and has steadfastly refused to cooperate with HUD mandated tenant relocation requirements for roughly 19 months. She has mostly ignored our efforts to communicate, refused units at two different public housing developments, and failed to complete the required voucher paperwork. She may not feel the need to comply with the rules because she's met with and received guidance from both James Roberts and city attorney Ricardo Woods. So, it's easy to see why the city continues to provide Estella and Laurie a global platform to disparage MHA without interruption or correction. Don't believe me? During a recent city council meeting, Laurie Hunter likened me to a "narcissistic sociopath." Say what? Indeed, she did while Council President CJ Small maintained perfect posture, didn't blink an eye or caution her against assailing a fellow citizens good name and character. So, without skipping a beat she continued.

Candidly, the entire community should be incensed city leaders have refused to congratulate and/or acknowledge MHAs Board, executives and staff for the agency's remarkable turnaround. Instead, city council members rarely if ever acknowledge receipt of updates highlighting the agency's performance. However, many smile approvingly while their hand-picked critics make innumerable malicious and false statements about the agency. Unquestionably, Mayor Stimpson's silence is more egregious and telling than the others because he receives the HUD B'Ham Field Office Recovery Agreement updates when MHA does (see HUDs May 2024 Recovery Agreement Update at mobilehousing.org). Consequently, his silence and agreement with the frequent malicious and false characterizations of me, the Board and the agency's true performance during city council meetings are reprehensible and require public explanation, apology and condemnation. Why? Because MHAs current Board of Commissioners were identified by Mayor Stimpson as the right individuals to "fix the housing authority" because of their outstanding character, good reputations, professional acumen and commitment to community. Yet somehow this group of distinguished citizens have completely lost their way and are frequently ridiculed for a lack of oversight by the sour two, city leaders and administration staff. But why? Because by official act they've failed to terminate me, secure my resignation

and/or resign themselves so individuals willing to execute the mayors directive can be appointed and finish the job. Amazingly, these are the same upstanding citizens Mayor Stimpson enthusiastically recommended to the council for appointment.

For roughly 4.5 years Mayor Stimpson and Neighborhood Development Senior Director James Roberts have alleged that I am unwilling to communicate or collaborate on affordable housing projects. Absent context and truth their accusations would be quiet troubling. However, during the infamous city council affordable housing committee meeting a year or so ago, I informed them any failure to communicate or collaborate was due to Mayor Stimpson informing James Roberts he didn't have to meet with or communicate with me. Instead, inquiries and/or information sharing would occur between me and other personnel. Confused yet? Well, you're not alone because so was I. It turns out James became agitated when I failed to give him the agency reins upon my arrival. Unbeknownst to me, prior to my arrival he developed a master plan for affordable housing on MHA owned property. The sites included Oaklawn Homes, Thomas James Place, R.V. Taylor Plaza, Boykin Tower and possibly Orange Grove. Roughly four to six months into my tenure he presented the plan to me and the rationale behind it. Stunned, I asked if MHAs Board had previously signaled they were in favor of the plan, and he responded no. With nearly 30 years of development experience under my belt, I could not imagine HUD ever approving a plan that would effectively put MHA out of business. Hence, the collaboration proposals I was asked to consider and recommend to the Board for approval made absolutely no sense for MHA and frankly shouldn't have seen the light of day. Incensed, James and Mayor Stimpson's somewhat quiet but consistent whispers throughout the community concerning my capacity to run the agency suddenly exploded into the public square.

Perhaps more troubling is why Mayor Stimpson would insist we support transactions that would ruin the agency. For the record, we have repeatedly shown a willingness to work collaboratively on mutually beneficial transactions. In fact, the city sponsored affordable housing projects highlighted below represent a win-win. It's worth noting neither project would have been viable without the cumulative HAP commitment for HCV vouchers of \$25.1 million over 20-years.

Estimated annual Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) commitment over 20-year HAP contract

Maryvale										
Mid 2024										
No of Units	No. of Bedrooms/Baths	Size of Units (sq. ft.)	Estimated Initial Gross Rent to Owner (incl. util. allowance)	Estimated Initial Utility Allowance	Estimated Initial Rent (tenant rent plus housing assistance payment)	Monthly HAP Commitment	# of Months	Annual HAP Commitment	Contract Term (years)	Estimated Total HAP over Contract Term
24	1 Br / 1 Ba	835	\$ 946.00	\$ 183.00	\$ 763.00	\$ 18,312.00				
41	2 Br / 2 Ba	1,123	\$ 1,166.00	\$ 235.00	\$ 900.00	\$ 36,900.00				
30	3 Br / 2 Ba	1,316	\$ 1,540.00	\$ 285.00	\$ 1,251.00	\$ 37,530.00				
95						\$ 92,742.00	12	\$ 1,112,904.00	20	\$ 22,258,080.00

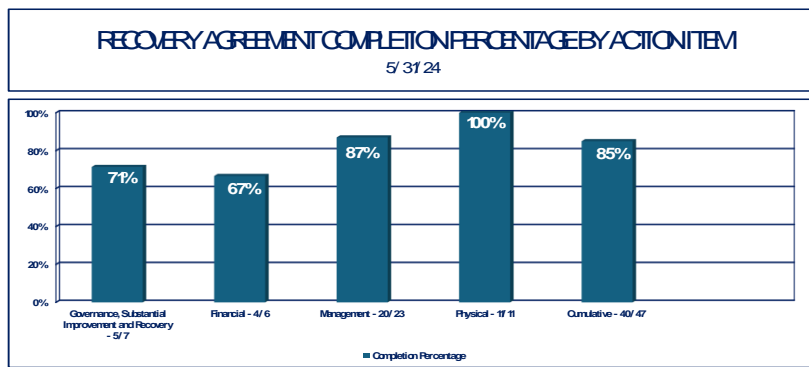
Estimated annual Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) commitment over 20-year HAP contract

Live Oak Trace										
Late 2025 or early 2026										
No of Units	No. of Bedrooms/Baths	Size of Units (sq. ft.)	Estimated Initial Gross Rent to Owner (incl. util. allowance)	Estimated Initial Utility Allowance	Estimated Initial Rent (tenant rent plus housing assistance payment)	Monthly HAP Commitment	# of Months	Annual HAP Commitment	Contract Term (20 years)	Total Estimated HAP Contract Value
0	1 Br / 1 Ba	-	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -					
14	2 Br / 2 Ba	-	\$ 1,085.00	\$ 237.00	\$ 848.00	\$ 11,872.00				
0	3 Br / 2 Ba	-			\$ -	\$ -				
14						\$ 11,872.00	12	\$ 142,464.00	20	\$ 2,849,280.00

It is true, however, that we have pushed back on city proposals practically demanding MHA give the “city for free” multiple public housing developments with combined land Fair Market Values exceeding \$40 million. As agency fiduciaries, the Board and I could not in good conscience recommend transactions of this nature to HUD for approval because they would guarantee the agency would not remain a going concern; thereby, failing to uphold its mission to provide safe, decent and affordable housing in perpetuity to area low-income residents. Additionally, the chances of HUD approving one or any of those type transactions are rationally nonexistent. Therefore, it shouldn’t surprise anyone that MHA would immediately find itself back in HUDs crosshairs while incinerating any capital it had gained during its historic turnaround.

Accusation and innuendo aside, below are two verified performance indicators which quickly extinguish the city’s and their select critics lies.

First, MHA has completed 85 percent of the Recovery Agreements Targeted Action Items and will likely be released from the Recovery Agreement by 12/31/25 or sooner.



Second, MHA is five months ahead of schedule relocating Thomas James Place and R.V. Taylor Plaza tenants impacted by the Special Application Center (SAC) Section 18 Demo/Dispo approvals.

MHA Resident Relocation Update
Thomas James Place & R.V. Taylor Plaza
June 21, 2024

- 323** Residents relocated (TJP 165 + R/VIP 168)
- 1** Relocations planned within 7 days
- 3** Relocations remaining (TJP 2 + R/VIP 1)
- 98.8%** Relocations Completed

Note: With 1 relocation scheduled in the next 7 days, the completion percentage will rise to 99.1%. The 2 remaining tenants are noncompliant and have been filed for eviction. Consequently, we anticipate both developments will be vacated mid to late July.

Report by Michael E. Pierce, CEO Mobile Housing Authority

Finally, the city’s smear campaign will not cease until I and the uncooperative Board members are dismissed and replaced. In any event, we mustn’t be deterred because MHAs importance to area low-income persons and the community are worth the struggle. Although I have not wronged Mayor Stimpson, his incessant desire to teach me and my wife Daphne a lesson while simultaneously tainting us professionally and personally is quite revealing. Experience has taught me to believe what a person reveals rather than some concocted ideal. This is incredibly personal for me, MHAs Board of Commissioners and employees. While they won’t say it publicly, I will. When a mayor, council person or anyone else relentlessly pursues and attacks you without cause with the intent to cause you harm, it’s illogical to expect the victim to feel anything but disdain for their assailant, right? As you scan our Board of Commissioners and employee lists below, imagine if your mother, father, sister, brother, spouse, significant other or friends name appeared. How would that

impact your feelings about city leaders and their designated critics antics? Perhaps a better question is what would motivate individuals occupying positions that require great community trust to knowingly and willfully misrepresent the work of voting Mobilians? Unfortunately, we've become too familiar with these "Mobile Hits." As we've recently witnessed, two Mobilians serving in high profile positions were unceremoniously relieved of their duties because the mayor simply couldn't bring himself to peacefully coexist with them. Not surprisingly, both were subjected to a measure of public ridicule before being forced out. Nevertheless, I remain confident of this one thing, the Lord will rightly judge between me, Mayor Stimpson and those who seek my harm. My conscience is as clear as my hands are clean, and I plan to continue the good work our team began five years ago until I am unable to.

Regards,

Michael E. Pierce

Michael E. Pierce
Chief Executive Officer



Reducing Housing Insecurity in PIH Agenda

Nashville, TN & Virtual (Zoom)
March 19 – 21, 2024
Central Time

Day 1: Public Housing Program Funds (Click Here) March 19, 2024

8:30 am – 9:00 am CT	Registration
9:00 am to 9:30 am CT	Welcome and Introductions Tosha LeSure – Regional PIH Director, Southeast Network (SEN) Dr. Troy White, Executive Director, Metropolitan Development & Housing Agency (MDHA) Richard (Rich) Monocchio – PIH Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary (PDAS) Jennifer Collins – FPM Region 4 Administrator (RA)
9:30 am to 11:00 am CT	Maximizing the use of Capital Funds <u>Presentation (30 mins)</u> David Fleishman, Director, Office of Capital Improvements (OCI) <u>Panel and Q&A (60 mins)</u> David Fleishman, Director, Office of Capital Improvements (OCI) Thomas Rowe, Executive Director, Murfreesboro Housing Authority (TN) <PHA> <i>Moderator: Cynthia Mitchell, Division Director, Tennessee OPH</i>
11:00 am – 11:15 am CT	BREAK
11:15 am – 12:45 pm CT	Maximizing the use of Operating Funds <u>Presentation (30 mins)</u> Kevin Gallagher, Director, Financial Management Division (FMD)



12:45 pm to 2:00 pm CT	<u>Panel and Q&A (60 mins)</u> Kevin Gallagher, Director, Financial Management Division (FMD) Anthony Goodson, Chief Executive Officer – Goldsboro Housing Authority (NC) Michael Dineen, Executive Director – Lenoir Housing Authority (NC) <i>Moderator: Raquel Hardin, Division Director, Greensboro OPH</i>
2:00 pm to 3:30 pm CT	Lunch (Onsite or on your own) Understanding the Section 18 Demolition, Disposition and Voluntary Conversions processes <u>Presentation (30 mins)</u> Jane Hornstein, Director, Special Applications Center (SAC) <u>Panel and Q&A (60 mins)</u> Jane Hornstein, Director, Special Applications Center (SAC) Michael Pierce, Executive Director, Mobile Housing Authority (AL) Margaret McGilvary, Mobile HA Repositioning Consultant, Econometrica <i>Moderator: Tim Kitts, Division Director, Louisville OPH</i>
3:30 pm to 5:00 pm CT	Re-Introduction to the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) <u>Presentation (30 mins)</u> William Lavy, Director, Program Administration (PAO) – Office of Recapitalization <u>Panel and Q&A (60 mins)</u> William Lavy, Director, Program Administration (PAO) – Office of Recapitalization Matt Lord, Program Analyst/RAD SME, Miami OPH <i>Moderator: Anne Akbari, Portfolio Management Specialist/RAD SME, Tennessee</i>
5:00 pm to 5:15 pm CT	Wrap Up Tosha LeSure – Regional PIH Director, Southeast Network (SEN)

MHA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Carlos Gant, Chairman
Roberta Swann, Vice-Chair
Ellis Foster, Jr.
Tyra Fair
Sydney King

MHA EMPLOYEE LIST		
Clifton Ambrose		Lewis McCorvey
Kelly Anderson	Onekia Finkley	Jeff McKee
Lisa Barney	Katrina Fluker	Marie Mhoon
Kathy Belcher	Terrelle Glover	Zakeisha Moore
Sherconda Black	Syaranda Grantham	Juanita Morgan
Wanda Boles	Quita Gulley	Richard Neese
Perry Boykin	Dannis Hardy	Merlinda Nettles
Rashida Brown	Merilyn Howard	Deneane O’Cain
Kathi Bryant	LaTrina Hughes	Michael Pierce
Anthony Bustamante	Jacquelyn Jackson	Tasha Portis
Janice Carroll	David Jarrell	Tekelia Powe-Terry
Julian Carson	John Jenkins	Rita Reese
Ricayah Carson	Eric Johnson	Jerome Reuben
Mark Chatham	Tameshia Kennedy	Reginald Riley
Kimberly Collins	Shawnita King	David Rome
Ray Collins Sr	Mark Lane	Kimberly Shelton
Tara Cook	Yeta Lett-Cook	Kelly Solano
Garry Crayton	Brittany Lockett	Erica Sutton
Tiffany Cromwell	Jamilia Lot	Jerrelen Thomas
Ken Cross	Kolfinna Luttrell	Felix Thompson
Sonya Curtis	Courtney Mack	Shermeka Turner
Ellvenus Davis	Walter Major	Karen Washington
Casey Dickinson	Kirby Martin	Sedeus Welch
Melisha Edwards	Samuel Matthews	Detonia Wheat
Tiawatta Ervin	Randy McCane	Erica Williams
Valissa Finch		Tuwana Williams