

**Pine Bluff Urban Renewal Agency**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**December 17, 2019**

The Pine Bluff Urban Renewal Agency (PBURA) held its monthly meeting on December 17, 2019 at The Baim Law Firm.

The following commissioners were in attendance:

Jimmy Dill, chair  
Travis Martin  
Kirby Mouser

Commissioners absent:

Rita Conley  
Lloyd Franklin, Sr.

Others in attendance:

Leigh Cockrum  
Dee Herring Gatlin  
Maurice Taggart, Executive Director (ED), PBURA, via conference call  
Ryan Watley

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Commissioner Dill.

The minutes of September 17, October 3, and November 6, 2019 meetings were presented.

Commissioner Kirby Mouser made a MOTION to approve the September 17, 2019, October 3, 2019, and November 6, 2019 minutes as presented. Commissioner Travis Martin seconded the motion and was APPROVED.

The September 2019, October 2019, and November 2019 financial statements were reviewed.

Commissioner Martin made a MOTION to approve the September 2019, October 2019, and November 2019 statements as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mouser and was APPROVED.

Executive Director Taggart reviewed the amended resolution regarding the Plaza Hotel purchase.

Commissioner Mouser made a MOTION to ratify the approval of the Amended Resolution Authorizing the Purchase and Transfer of the Plaza Hotel and Suites. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Martin and was APPROVED.

ED Taggart presented the 2020 Budget for the Pine Bluff Urban Renewal Agency.

Commissioner Martin made a MOTION to approve the 2020 Budget for the Pine Bluff Urban Renewal Agency as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mouser and was APPROVED.

ED Taggart presented a request for a Christmas bonus to PBURA employees. This request will be considered in Executive Session.

ED Taggart presented a budget adjustment for \$180,804 to be transferred from Downtown Improvements to Capital Purchases to facilitate the purchase of the Plaza Hotel.

Commissioner Mouser made a MOTION to approve the former budget adjustment request by Executive Director Taggart to transfer \$180,804 from Downtown Improvements to Capital Purchases to facilitate the purchase of the Plaza Hotel. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Martin and was APPROVED.

In Other Business, ED Taggart made the following reports:

- The appraisal on the Plaza Hotel will be back on December 23. Closing is set for the 23<sup>rd</sup> at 9:30 a.m. Financing for the renovation is being explored. Once the property is received by the PBURA, it will be transferred to the Civic Center Auditorium Commission (CCAC). The CCAC has the authority to issue bonds for improvements. The CCAC has already committed to purchasing the Hotel from the PBURA.
- The Harding Drainage Study was received from Civil Engineering Associates, LLC by the Economic and Community Development Department. Approximately \$21M will complete the work recommended. The cost of square footage the study recommended for the retention pond would cost approximately \$3M.

Publicity of the PBURA's contribution to this project needs to be publicized. These funds will help with the flash flooding that occurs in the urban renewal area. A map should be provided to the public to demonstrate where the Harding Drain is and where the retention pond will be located (back behind the ditch between the old Admiral Benbow Inn and the car wash on Harding Avenue).

The PBURA has allocated \$75K for drainage. A discussion will be held when all commissioners are present.

- We have received the Attorney General's opinion. A copy was emailed to commissioners as well as one provided in the meeting packet.
- A Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into negotiations with the PBURA to address remediation of public nuisances has been approved by the city council. A draft of a Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the Urban Renewal Agency to Advance the Remediation of Public Nuisances within the Urban Renewal Area, and Related Purposes is included in the meeting packet that will be submitted to the city council for approval. A draft of the Cooperative Agreement is also in the meeting packet.
  - Concerns about timeline/timeframe commitments not under the PBURA's control, i.e., weather, were raised and adjustments made.
  - Commissioner Dill relayed two concerns of city council members:
    - The PBURA will condemn property.
      - Our response: The City condemns the property, not the PBURA.
    - The PBURA will put liens on property.

- Our response: The PBURA has no right to collect funds; the funds go into the City's General Fund.
- Anticipate demolition resuming mid-January if everything goes as planned. Forty files/houses are ready to go.
- 2020 Meeting Dates were reviewed. Due to holidays and/or city council meetings in January and February, the January meeting was moved to January 21 and February meeting to February 25, 2020.
- A truck driver has been hired and is in training. An excavator operator has been hired. ED Taggart has interviewed eleven people for the URA agent position and hopes to have someone hired soon.
- ED Taggart is in the process of drafting some changes to how urban renewal agencies can operate when the legislature meets again.
- Drawings are being done on the Main Street buildings.
- Interviews will be conducted in January for the three companies that made it to the RFP stage for the housing development.

Commissioner Dill gave credit for the Attorney General's opinion to Maurice Taggart. ED Taggart suggested we ask for the opinion, we did and received a favorable one, and now we can move forward with demolition.

Commissioner Dill also referenced Channel 7's interview with Taggart. They also interviewed two people who live near dilapidated houses, and both said they were glad the houses were going to be torn down because of crime, blight, and what they were doing to the community.

No public comments were made.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned to Executive Session.

/s/ Leigh Cockrum  
Leigh Cockrum  
Recorder

/s/ Wm. Kirby Mouser  
W. Kirby Mouser  
Secretary