

LAND BANK AUTHORITY MINUTES

Time: Wednesday, September 10th, 2025, 12PM - 1PM

Place: Annex 1st Floor Conference Room, 420 10th St.

Call to Order: Sherrie Aaron, 12:10pm

Board Members Present In-Person: Reynolds Bickerstaff, Michelle Williams, Sherrie Aaron, Tomeika Farley, Steve Anthony

Board Members Present Virtually: Deidre Tilley

Board Members Absent: Carson Cummings

Community Reinvestment Staff: Robert Scott (Director), Aysia Merritt (Real Estate Specialist), Kim Mitchell (Assistant Director/Board Secretary)

Guests: 2

1. Introductions of Board Members, Staff and Guests

2. Approve Minutes from July 9th, 2025

Motion to approve minutes from July 9, 2025

1st: Steve Anthony

2nd: Michelle Williams

3. Director's Report

Director Scott shared that the City is undergoing an operational assessment review for all departments under the City Manager's office. The Clerk of Council has asked for the attendance of all board members, including excused and unexcused absences. The clerk has also asked to learn more about challenges the boards are experiencing.

Director Scott also shared that he had a meeting with Tax Commissioner Britt on August 21st. He stated that he explained what the land bank was and how we acquire property, discussed opportunity zones and recapture periods, etc. However, according to the Tax Commissioner, his office's preference is to give the Land Bank properties with demolition liens over tax liens. The Tax Commissioner's office wants an opportunity to sell properties with structures on at the tax sale before they give a property to the land bank. Director Scott adds that this might also be a perception issue, where that office does not see the potential in using the Land Bank to sell properties with structures that can be rehabilitated. Furthermore, it will make the Land Bank's job harder to try to sell only the worst properties. Director Scott stated, however, that discussions with the Tax Commissioner are only in the early stages and that the Tax Commissioner is building out his staff capacity.

One of the next steps will be to get more information from the Tax Commissioner to see what the true goals will be and what properties could be eligible/ineligible for the Land

Bank. Mr. Anthony asked if the Tax Commissioner is aware of the momentum the Land Bank Authority built under Natalie (prior Real Estate Specialist) and Director Scott. Director Scott shared that the those successes were from people petitioning for properties, not from the “opportunity zones.” The Tax Commissioner is aware of some of the successes of the Land Bank, including the farm, Glenwood, etc.

Mr. Bickerstaff asked if the board could present a vision for the Land Bank to the Tax Commissioner and see if he will give the board a chance to demonstrate its value. Director Scott stated that the board needed to give the Tax Commissioner’s office time to take action since they hold all the power. Director Scott offered to share with the LBA’s vision with the Tax Commissioner, including the number of units they would like (e.g., 5-6 per year), alternative plans for the opportunity zones, etc. However, the board might need to have further conversations to get properties requested by the public. Mr. Anthony rebutted that the board has already proven that we can do this. Director Scott shared that this was proven under a different programmatic structure.

Director Scott invited the board members to join his conversations with the Tax Commissioner. Mr. Anthony inquired if the board could invite the Tax Commissioner to one of its meetings, adding that the entire year had been a waste of time. Mr. Anthony stated that he did not want to have these same conversations 6 months from now. He stated that he did not see the purpose the board was serving, which was agreed upon by Ms. Aaron and Mr. Bickerstaff. Ms. Williams commented that the board’s mission (community value) would be fighting against the Tax Commissioner’s profit motive.

Mr. Bickerstaff inquired if all of the board members are allowed to be in the room. He stated that he did not want to bypass the Director, but give the Director more support because many of the board members worked in real estate. Ms. Farley commented that until staff figures out the game plan for the board, the board has nothing to discuss. She affirmed Mr. Bickerstaff’s comments stating that it would be helpful to talk to the Tax Commissioner in person. Secretary Mitchell commented that if everyone on the board is present, this might constitute a quorum and suggested that the board either hold a public meeting with the Tax Commissioner or send a number of representatives that does not constitute a quorum.

Director Scott stated that staff can reach out for a meeting. He asked the board for a specific date range. He expressed his interest for the board to be up and running by January 1st. Director Scott agreed to reach out to the Tax Commissioner to request his availability for the next 3 weeks. He added that the meeting would have to take place during the daytime and stated that it would be helpful to have 1-3 representatives from the board.

Director Scott transitioned to the topic of the CDAC meeting on September 11th at 2pm. He shared that at the CDAC meeting, there would also be a presentation of the department’s annual performance report that explained how CRD leveraged its HUD entitlement funds. He added that the staff would present the report again at the September 23rd council meeting.

4. 2025 National Land Bank Network Summit

Director Scott shared findings from the 2025 National Land Bank Summit in Detroit, MI. He shared that he met Land Banks from all over the country and learned that “all land banks are not created equal.” He noted that land banks have different structures and supports. Using the Detroit Land Bank as an example, he discussed how land banks can be used for city revitalization. As the largest landowner in the city, the Detroit Land Bank has found ways to expedite development processes. He shared that their Land Bank offers pre-approved plans for multiple types of houses to reduce the permitting process. He noted that some lots were also used as gardens, pocket parks or combined lots to make large parks. He shared that the Land Bank Authority could impact more than just approval procedures to create efficiencies.

Real Estate Specialist Merritt also shared her findings from the conference. After taking a bus tour, Ms. Merritt observed that Detroit was turning army storage units into housing. She noted that the Land Bank has buy-in from citizens and businesses and is used to pour back into the city. She commented that there were two full parks with programming created from land bank property. Ms. Merritt agreed to send a number of resources out to the board via email.

5. 2810 Peabody Ave – Release of Right of Reversion

Ms. Merritt shared that the owners of the property have maintained the lot based on the City Codes and Ordinances as confirmed with Inspections and Codes. She informed the board that the deed was released.

Ms. Williams inquired if staff had ever heard back from Josh Nicholson. Ms. Merritt stated that he had not followed up with staff. However, according to the tax assessor’s website, he was still in possession of the property.

6. Rest of Year Schedule

Mr. Anthony asked if the board should meet in November. Ms. Aaron suggested that the board meet with the Tax Commissioner first, then reconvene in December. Director Scott concurred that a board meeting in December would give staff more time to set up a meeting with the Tax Commissioner. He asked if the board would let him know who they want to represent them in the meeting with the Tax Commissioner. Ms. Aaron, Mr. Bickerstaff and Mr. Anthony expressed an interest in joining the meeting.

Mr. Anthony commented that if the board is not planning to meet again until December, there is no need to rush to meet with the Tax Commissioner in the next few weeks. Director Scott commented that his goal is to move forward by January 1st. He added that he did not want too much time to elapse between meetings with the Tax Commissioner, so that the board might be “out of sight, out of mind.”

Ms. Farley inquired about why the board was necessary. Mr. Anthony stated that he had been on the board 8-10 years, and that under Natalie Bouyett and Director Scott, the board was active. However, this changed with the transition in the tax commissioner’s office because they would not sign off on foreclosures. One of the guests commented that the house he wanted to acquire was deteriorating over time and now had trees growing inside. Mr. Bickerstaff reiterated that the staff should set up a meeting with the

Tax Commissioner and possibly hold a special meeting afterward to re-evaluate the board's status.

Ms. Merritt asked board members to send her an email if they plan to be absent. Director Scott added that direct communications to him would not count as notification. He added that he did not want to be responsible for recording the board members' absences. Ms. Merritt added that emails can also be forwarded to the City Clerk for her records, as requested by the clerk last month. Ms. Aaron expressed consternation at the handout showing board member absences. Ms. Merritt and Director Scott reiterated that the handout was not meant to be punitive, but it was required for documentation. Ms. Farley asked if the minutes would reflect what constitutes as an excused or unexcused absence. Ms. Merritt stated that an absence would be excused if she received an email notifying her of the absence at least one day prior to the meeting. Ms. Farley stated that she usually replied to the email sent by Ms. Merritt. Ms. Merritt confirmed that this was fine, as long as it was sent before the day of the meeting.

Motion to adjourn

1st: Reynolds Bickerstaff

2nd: Steve Anthony

Call to Adjourn, 1:08pm