July 31, 2026

The Honorable Cynthia I. Newbille
President, Richmond City Council
Richmond City Hall
900 East Broad Street, Suite 300
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear President Newbille:

I have received Commissioner Barrett Hardiman's letter resigning from the Board of Commissioners of the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, effective immediately.

First, I want to thank Commissioner Hardiman for his many years of service to the Authority and the residents we serve. Public service requires significant commitment, and I appreciate the time and effort he devoted to the Board.

At the same time, as Chair of the Board of Commissioners and on behalf of the Leadership of the Board, I believe it is important to address several statements contained in his resignation letter. While I respect Commissioner Hardiman's right to express his views, I do not agree with many of the characterizations he makes regarding the Board's leadership and the Authority.

Over the past several years, the Board has experienced recurring concerns regarding Commissioner Hardiman's conduct and interactions with fellow commissioners and the CEO. Those concerns became so sufficiently serious that, during a Special Meeting of the Board last year, the Board considered a resolution to censure Commissioner Hardiman based on conduct that some commissioners believed could constitute misconduct in office under Section 36-17 of the Code of Virginia that would have been sent to City Council for consideration. After extensive discussion, the Board ultimately chose not to pursue further action and instead hoped that we could move forward collaboratively.

In his resignation letter, Commissioner Hardiman states that he raised concerns about transparency, accountability, communication with commissioners, responsiveness to residents, and the overall direction of the Authority. I have consistently been willing to discuss those issues. In fact, shortly after becoming Chair, I met with Commissioner Hardiman to seek his advice and encourage a productive working relationship. More recently, I again met with him in an effort to improve communication and to work together constructively on matters involving transparency, accountability, and the future direction of the Authority.

While we did not agree on all items, we did reach an agreement on potential reforms to better the Authority and ensure stronger transparency. Even with those agreements, there were disagreements regarding Board governance and communications. For example, during a Board meeting I reminded commissioners that, under the Board's bylaws, the

Chair serves as the Board's official spokesperson to the press on Board matters. Commissioner Hardiman strongly expressed a different interpretation of his rights to communicate with the media. While we disagreed on that issue, it reflected a broader difference in our views regarding Board governance and protocol. Commissioner Hardiman's continued conduct has impacted the order of the Board.

I also believe it is important to acknowledge events that occurred during this week's Board meeting. During an exchange with Chief Executive Officer Steven Nesmith, Commissioner Hardiman made remarks that Mr. Nesmith interpreted as threatening. Mr. Nesmith immediately requested that legal counsel note his concern. Several commissioners expressed concern about the exchange and indicated that they viewed it as inappropriate and unrelated to the business before the Board. I will not speculate about Commissioner Hardiman's intent, but I believe the incident contributed to the circumstances surrounding his resignation.

The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority has an important mission that extends beyond any one commissioner or any individual disagreement. The Board remains committed to conducting its work professionally, transparently, and in the best interests of the residents and communities we serve and fully supports the leadership of our Chief Executive Officer, Steven Nesmith.

Again, I thank Commissioner Hardiman for his years of service. The Board of Commissioners will continue to focus on the Authority's mission, and I look forward to our upcoming retreat as we work together to ensure RRHA's five-year strategic plan algins with the priorities of City Council and strengthen the future of the organization.

Respectfully,

Eddie L. Jackson, Jr.
Chairman, RRHA Board of Commissioners