

Sometimes the
questions are
complicated and
the answers
are simple.

– DR. SEUSS



GCRA Board Meeting
April 22, 2025

May 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Administration Committee meeting, 12:30	14	15 Operations Committee meeting, 12:30	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 Memorial Day (Office Closed)	27 Board meeting, 12:30	28	29	30	31

June 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Administration Committee meeting, 12:30	11	12 Operations Committee meeting, 12:30	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Board meeting, 12:30	25	26	27	28
29	30					

**GCRA Board Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, April 22, 2025 – 12:30 p.m.
GCRA Board Room**

- 1) Call to Order Chair Barry Coleman
- 2) Invocation
- 3) *Approval of March 25, 2025 Board Minutes (Pages 5 – 8)
- 4) Administration Committee Reports (Pages 9 – 11)
 - a) Financial Highlights – KPI (Page 12)
- 5) Operations Committee (Pages 13 – 15)
 - a) *Approval of Construction Cost & Sales Price Profile
- 6) Other Business
 - a) Executive Director Updates
- 7) Executive Session. When necessary, the Board convenes in Executive Session for the discussion of negotiations incidental to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed sale or purchase of property, the receipt of legal advice where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the Redevelopment Authority of a claim, or other matters authorized by the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.
- 8) Adjournment

Minutes
Greenville County Redevelopment Authority
Regular Session
Tuesday, March 25, 2025

Board Members Present: Barry Coleman, Chair
Denise Ernul, Vice Chair
Amy Coleman, Treasurer
Dean Doolittle
David Doser
James Hammond
Robert Julian
Jane Kizer
Walter Moragne
Joanna Reese
Diana Weir

Guest Present: DJ Wilson

Staff Members Present: Joe Smith, Executive Director
Pamela Proner, Finance Director
Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 12:30 p.m. A guest, Ms. DJ Wilson, was in attendance because of her interest in applying for appointment to the board.
2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Mr. Doser.
3. **Approval of the February 25, 2025 Board Minutes.** On a motion by Ms. Weir, seconded by Mr. Moragne, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the February 25, 2025 Board meeting as presented.
4. **Administration Committee.** Ms. Weir praised staff for their diligent work in reviewing the funding request applications and for presenting the information to the Committee members.
 - a. **Approval of PY 2025 CDBG Unincorporated Public Service Subrecipients.** Ms. Weir stated that the committee unanimously approved the Program Year 2025 CDBG unincorporated public service subrecipient funding as presented.

On a motion by Mr. Doser, the Board unanimously approved the Program Year 2025 CDBG unincorporated public service subrecipient funding.

- b. Approval of PY 2025 ESG Public Service Subrecipients.** Ms. Weir stated that the committee unanimously approved the Program Year 2025 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) public service subrecipient funding as presented.

On a motion by Ms. Coleman, the Board unanimously approved the Program Year 2025 ESG subrecipient funding.

- c. Approval of PY 2025 Home Repair Subrecipient.** Ms. Weir stated that the committee unanimously approved the Program Year 2025 home repair subrecipient funding for Rebuild Upstate as presented.

On a motion by Mr. Moragne, the Board unanimously approved the Program Year 2025 home repair subrecipient funding.

- d. Approval of PY 2025 Developer/Partner.** Ms. Weir stated that the committee unanimously approved the Program Year 2025 developer/partner funding for CommunityWorks as presented.

On a motion by Ms. Ernul, the Board unanimously approved the Program Year 2025 developer/partner funding.

- e. Approval of PY 2025 Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO).** Ms. Weir stated that the committee unanimously approved the Program Year 2025 funding for Habitat for Humanity as presented.

Mr. Hammond asked about the project that will be funded by this award; Mr. Smith responded that it will be for completion of two to three more houses on Sturtevant Street, where Habitat has been building and which GCRA has funded this year.

On a motion by Mr. Moragne, the Board unanimously approved the Program Year 2025 CHDO funding.

Mr. Doser noted that Habitat for Humanity was not funded for the new year because they are still operating on a previous year's funding. Mr. Smith added that after suffering reduction in staffing during the COVID pandemic, they have been increasing capacity and doing well under the leadership of their new Executive Director, LaTonya Phillips. Their sponsorship numbers have increased and they have cultivated excellent relationships with local vendors.

- f. Financial Highlights/KPI.** Ms. Proner stated that one developer partner, NHE, completed a draw for the Parkside at Butler project which is nearing completion. Notes Payable reflects the final draw for construction of the Fairview Townhomes. The LGIP balance is still very healthy, at \$8.7 million, having earned \$33,000 in interest during the last month for a total of \$403,000 earned year-to-date. Ms. Proner also noted that on March 14th, the County paid GCRA one million dollars toward the current fiscal year; we still lack the \$200,000 from the previous fiscal year.

5. **Operations Committee.** Mr. Doser stated that there were no approval items presented at the March Operations Committee meeting. He noted that one more Fairview townhome has been sold, with two more closings scheduled for Friday. Only two rental units were unoccupied, with one being renovated in preparation for a new tenant.
6. **Other Business – Executive Director Updates.** Mr. Smith provided updates as follows:
 - a. **County Council/Properties Update.** Mr. Smith stated that he will seek meetings and tours for Councilman Collins and Councilwoman Long. Properties for Projects Piedmont, Ballfield, and Railroad should be on the Finance Committee agenda for April. Phase I environmental review is in process for these properties, facilitated by GCRA's Brownfields grant.
 - b. **Annual Action Plan Meetings.** Mr. Smith stated that he and Mr. Reynoso will attend the Greer City Council meeting that evening, which is the last one for the year. Mr. Smith has received positive feedback about Mr. Reynoso's presentations at the other city council meetings, and councilmembers have been engaged in the process.
 - c. **Snow Street Place Apartments, Greer.** Mr. Smith reviewed the history of this development and stated that staff have visited the property and found it to be in good condition, just in need of some standard maintenance. Management of the units has gone more smoothly since it was switched to a local company. The Greenville Housing Fund will assist Senior Action in identifying a buyer, or may purchase the complex themselves. Mr. Doser restated that the goal is for Senior Action to sell the apartment complex and for it to remain affordable. This is a similar situation to the Harmony Ridge units in Travelers Rest.
 - d. **Greenville County Longterm Recovery Group.** Mr. Smith stated that he met Thursday with this group who are developing a framework such that when a natural disaster occurs, there are a number of resources available to assist citizens who are underinsured, uninsured, or otherwise economically disadvantaged. A challenge in this effort is determining how best to communicate the available resources to the people who may need them, as certain demographics are not internet-savvy, and some folks are suspicious of government entities. Ms. Ernul suggested involving local fire departments who know their small communities well.
 - e. **Tours of Affordable Housing.** Mr. Smith showed on-screen an invitation sent to County Council, inviting them to participate in a tour of affordable housing; this is a joint effort by GCRA, the Greenville Housing Fund, Homes of Hope, and NHE to showcase affordable homes constructed recently in the county by these four agencies, as well as properties that have stood the test of time over a number of years.
 - f. **HUD Findings Update.** Mr. Smith reminded the board of deficiencies identified by our HUD representatives regarding some environmental clearance procedural issues. Staff have worked diligently to strengthen our internal processes to comply with HUD environmental assessment guidelines. Today, we received a letter stating that all issues are now clear and we have completed all requirements to satisfy HUD's criteria.

- g. County Funding Allocation Update.** Ms. Proner stated that she has received the expected one-million-dollar allocation from the County. As County Council is entering their budget cycle discussion for the next two fiscal years, GCRA is lobbying Council members in regards to continuing current levels of funding. Applications for Affordable Housing Fund dollars were less this year due to no LIHTC projects being funded in Greenville County; developers are restructuring their projects in order to hopefully continue regardless of State funding.
- h. Questions.** Mr. Doser requested that Mr. Smith provide an update about the Gridley Place project in the Sans Souci community for the benefit of the full board. Mr. Smith showed a map of the two parcels on Gridley and Morris Streets and explained that we have encountered development issues because of choosing the Flexible Review District (FRD) zoning designation. Discussion ensued regarding types of zoning and the limitations of each. We will proceed with three duplexes on the north side to create six more units of affordable rental housing with no cost to us outside of HOME funds, and with no homeowners' association necessary. However, on the south side, rather than building townhomes for homeownership as with the Fairview model, we plan to construct four single-family houses for sale; a homeowners' association will not be necessary here either. Staff will soon bid the infrastructure work to include the sewer line on Morris Street in order to facilitate construction of the townhouses under current zoning while seeking rezoning for the southern part of the site to allow for single-family residences.

Ms. Coleman inquired about the status of hiring a new Program Manager and Operations Director. Mr. Smith responded that several interviews have been conducted for the Program Manager position; candidates have been strong, but Mr. Smith is not confident that we have identified the ideal person yet. Additionally, it is worth considering that the Department of Housing and Urban Development may be significantly changed soon in light of current staffing cuts, so we may be wise to wait and reconsider the responsibilities and needs of GCRA's Program Department. Meanwhile, Mr. Reynoso, with assistance from directors and from GCRA's consultant for the Consolidated Plan, has been doing an excellent job of maintaining contact with HUD representatives and meeting deadlines. Mr. Smith also shared that Mr. Chesney, GCRA's new Project Manager, is doing a wonderful job and is gaining experience with HUD requirements and County processes. Therefore, it is not necessary to fill the Operations Director position at this time. Mr. Smith thanked Ms. Coleman for her question and concern, and reiterated that he always welcomes and encourages questions from board members.

- 7. Adjournment.** There being no further business, on a motion by Ms. Kizer, seconded by Mr. Doser, the meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

Secretary

Memorandum

To: GCRA Board Members

From: Diana Weir, Administration Committee Chair

Re: Administration Committee Meeting, April 8, 2025

Date: April 8, 2025

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The Administration Committee met on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 12:30 p.m. Committee members present were Diana Weir, Chair; Jane Kizer (virtual), Vice Chair; Amy Coleman; Barry Coleman; and Joanna Reese. Dean Doolittle was absent. Staff present were Joe Smith, Executive Director; Pamela Proner, Finance Director; José Reynoso, Senior Community Development Planner; and Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager.
2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Mr. Coleman.

Please review the following items of business discussed at the Administration Committee meeting. These items will not be discussed in the Board Meeting unless there is a question or comment about them.

3. Administration Reports

- a. **Subrecipient Report.** Mr. Reynoso presented the report, noting that SHARE typically waits until the end of the fiscal year to submit their reimbursement requests. If they do not expend all of their funding allocation, it will be reallocated to other agencies.
- b. **HOME-ARP Subrecipient Performance Report.** Mr. Reynoso presented the report, stating that HUD recently inquired about the status of allocation of funds; we responded that all expenditures have been allocated or accounted for.
- c. **CDBG Timeliness Test.** Mr. Reynoso presented the report, noting that the goal by May of 2025 is a ratio of 1.5; at the time of packet publication, we were at a ratio of 1.56 with \$171,970 left to spend to be in compliance with CDBG guidelines. Ms. Proner stated that since publication of the packet, we spent the remaining funds necessary to be in compliance.

4. Financial Reports

- a. **Financial Highlights – KPI.** Ms. Proner reviewed the financial report for the month of February, noting that there have not been significant changes since the previous month.

Total Assets show an increase of seven percent because she removed the \$200,000 that the County has not paid us and created an Accounts Receivable line item for it instead.

Ms. Weir asked what is expected for next year's funding from the County. Ms. Proner responded that we believe we can reasonably expect at least the one-million-dollar allocation; the better approach is to treat this funding like program income to ensure that we do not overcommit to new projects. Mr. Smith agreed that this is the best, most conservative approach.

The Rental portfolio has a positive balance of \$14,617; Ms. Proner noted that it is helpful to remember that what drives the rental account balance is whether there have been expenditures for repairs, maintenance, and costs due to vacancies.

GCRA's balance in the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) is \$8.7 million, representing 76 percent of total cash. \$30,470 in interest was earned in February, at an average interest rate of 4.56 percent. Discussion ensued about the risk and security of the LGIP investments.

- b. **February Financials.** There were no questions posed for Ms. Proner regarding the financial statements.

5. **Other Business – Executive Director Updates.** Mr. Smith provided updates as follows:

- a. **Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan Status.** Mr. Smith stated that all meetings with municipalities were positive, with excellent feedback received.
- b. **Municipality Projects.** Mr. Smith stated that he would be meeting the next day with City of Greer staff and officials to discuss planning priorities for the Sunnyside neighborhood.

Mr. Smith noted that Greer officials will follow a three-reading process at their council meetings to approve conveying the two lots in the Needmore community to GCRA.

Mr. Smith shared details about the refinancing or potential sale of the Snow Street Place Apartments; due diligence is underway.

Mr. Smith stated that we are advising Greenville Housing Fund of the procedures for HVAC replacement at Harmony Ridge after approval by Travelers Rest administration.

- c. **Fairview Townhomes.** Mr. Smith stated that two more townhomes sold in the last week, for a total of four units sold; marketing efforts continue.
- d. **Longterm Disaster Response.** Mr. Smith stated that the second meeting with the Greenville County Long-term Recovery Group was postponed due to the Table Rock wildfires. Additionally, staff will meet with South Carolina Office of Resiliency (SCOR) representatives soon to discuss working together on long-term recovery efforts in the state.

- e. **County Council/Properties Update.** Mr. Smith stated that Phase I environmental clearances are still underway for the three properties GCRA hopes to receive from Greenville County. Staff and board members are trying to meet with each of the council members who serve on the County Finance Committee to present the benefits of deeding the three parcels to GCRA for the development of affordable housing.

Mr. Smith stated that the next day, he will be participating in the first affordable housing tour with partner agencies to showcase affordable housing in the Upstate. Councilman Frank Farmer will attend this tour.

Discussion ensued regarding potential development plans for the Project Piedmont parcel, including partnership possibilities and multi-use opportunities.

- f. **County Staff Changes.** Mr. Smith remarked about the departure of Tee Coker as Planning Director for Greenville County and his move to assume the role of City Administrator of Simpsonville after the current administrator's departure. It is Mr. Smith's intent to engage with the new hire for the Greenville County position as soon as they are identified. Meanwhile, Hesha Gamble, the Assistant County Administrator for Engineering and Public Works, will be overseeing the department. Mr. Smith and Ms. Gamble have a long-term working relationship; Ms. Gamble has always been helpful to GCRA and fully supports our mission.

Discussion ensued regarding the long-term strategy for acquiring property, thereby insuring GCRA's viability for the near and distant future.

- g. **Staff Vacancies.** Mr. Smith shared that several additional interviews for the Program Manager position have been conducted. Meanwhile, he has been pleased with staff collaboration across departments and willingness to assist one another with special projects as needed. Mr. Smith emphasized his desire for an appropriate level of staff.
- h. **General Questions.** Ms. Weir inquired about the size of GCRA compared to other redevelopment authorities, and who handles Section 8 for Greenville County. Mr. Smith responded that GCRA is one of the largest and more successful agencies in the state, and that Section 8 is handled by the Greenville Housing Authority.

Mr. Coleman expressed concerns about the possibility of a firehouse on the Project Kayak property. Discussion ensued; the project is very preliminary at this point.

Mr. Coleman inquired as to the philosophy of building townhomes for rental in Sans Souci which currently has no units of this type. Discussion ensued regarding the viability of a townhome project given the exorbitant insurance expense and the general cumbersome nature of homeowners' associations.

- 6. **Adjournment.** There being no further business and on a motion by Ms. Reese, seconded by Mr. Coleman, the meeting was adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

GCRA Financial Highlights
Month at a Glance February 25

<u>Government-Wide</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Change from Prior Month</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Change from FY24 (FYTD)</u>	<u>%</u>
Cash	11,534,915	Increase	1%	Decrease	-7%
Total Assets	47,288,838	Increase	7%	Increase	16%
Notes Payable	3,352,206	Decrease	0%	Increase	7%
Debt-to-income			4%		0%
Net Position	37,578,800	Decrease	0%	Increase	10%
Net invest. in capital assets	12,045,453	Decrease	0%	Increase	33%
Unrestricted net assets	25,533,347	Decrease	0%	Increase	2%

<u>Governmental Funds</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Change from Prior Month</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Revenue	430,773	Decrease	-12%	5,286,880
Expenditures	406,337	Decrease	-56%	5,975,389
Net change in fund balance	24,436	Increase	-106%	(688,509)

<u>Rental Portfolio</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Change from Prior Month</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Net Income (loss)	14,617	Increase	4029%	68,430 *

<u>Local Government Invest. Pool</u>	<u>Month</u>			<u>YTD</u>
LGIP Balance	8,746,492	% of total cash:	76%	
Interest Earned	30,470	Avg Interest rate:	4.56%	434,442

Notes:

GCRA is still waiting on the \$200,000 FY24 Budget balance to be received from the County.

Monthly Highlights:

Rental Portfolio:

*with intercompany transfer

Memorandum

To: GCRA Board Members

From: David Doser, Operations Committee Chair

Re: Operations Committee Meeting, April 10, 2025

Date: April 10, 2025

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The Operations Committee met on Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 12:30 p.m. Committee members present were David Doser, Chair; James Hammond, Vice Chair; Denise Ernul; and Walter Moragne. Mr. Julian was absent. Staff present were Joe Smith, Executive Director; Levi Chesney, Project Manager; and Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager.

2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Mr. Moragne.

Action Items: The following item which was considered by the Operations Committee must be approved or ratified by the Board.

3. **Approval of Construction Cost & Sales Price Profile.** Mr. Chesney referred to page 13 of the packet and presented the construction cost and sales price as follows:

Address	Area	Construction Cost	Sales Price
1306 W. Bramlett Road	City View	\$151,000	\$275,000

Profiles for construction cost and sales price were first approved in 2021, when staff originally planned to partner with Habitat for Humanity to build this house. Costs have since increased substantially, so it is now necessary to approve an updated construction cost and sales price. Discussion ensued about the City View area, subsidy that will likely be necessary for sale of the home, and the design and layout of this new house plan.

On a motion by Mr. Hammond, seconded by Ms. Ernul, the committee voted unanimously to approve the construction cost and sales price updates for 1306 W. Bramlett Road as presented.

* * * * *

Please review the following items of business discussed at the Operations Committee meeting. These items will not be discussed in the Board meeting unless there is a question or comment about them.

4. Operations Reports

- a. **Home Sales Report.** Mr. Chesney presented the Home Sales Status Report for March, noting the two Fairview townhomes that were under contract; the closings to sell these two homes have taken place, for a total of four sold.
- b. **Rental Property Reports.** Mr. Chesney presented the Rental Report for March. He stated that only one unit is vacant, 15-A Pine Street. While staff has received requests to rent this property, identifying an eligible tenant is challenging due to the age and income restrictions in place. Discussion ensued regarding marketing GCRA rentals, State Housing restrictions on the unit, and potential remedies for accessibility issues.

The Rental Delinquency Report for March showed a past due balance of \$13,550; this figure was reduced to \$10,488 since packet publication, attributable in part to tax returns helping some tenants to bring accounts current.

- c. **Operations Activity Report.** Mr. Chesney presented the Activity Report for March. Four owner-occupied repair projects were completed during the month. Approximately 10-12 applications are in progress for the new Disaster Assistance Program. Mr. Moragne inquired about the goal of 42 repairs for the fiscal year; Mr. Chesney responded about the environmental clearance program delay earlier in the year and other factors that have slowed the program this year. Discussion ensued regarding the owner-occupied program and its goals over the years, partnering with other agencies to help address repair needs, and the lengthy process of working with homeowners who are often in difficult life situations and who struggle to provide all necessary documentation to complete the application process. Mr. Smith noted that a significant problem now is the reduction in the number of contractors available, as well as the state of the economy and thin profit margins likely driving contractors to pursue higher-profit work.

Mr. Smith stated that over the past six years, we have contributed \$7.8 million towards \$232 million worth of projects, generating 958 units, at an average of about \$8,200 per unit; he recently shared these figures with Councilmen Blount and Farmer. Mr. Hammond noted that a “report card” to showcase such data would be an excellent sales pitch to County Council, the media, and the general public for the work GCRA does. Mr. Smith stated that staff are gathering additional figures to build a report card style presentation that will be shared with the board soon.

Mr. Chesney shared that the contract for renovation of the Annex has been executed. The contractor is working to pull permits, and we hope to see construction begin towards the end of the month.

- d. **Public Works Report.** Mr. Chesney stated that he has been working with our engineers to prepare for bidding the infrastructure portion of the Gridley Place project. He is in contact with the Department of Transportation regarding stormwater issues related to the Iola Wilson Street project.
 - e. **Loan Portfolio Report.** Mr. Smith presented the 3rd Quarter loan portfolio report, noting a delinquency rate of 2.3 percent, a reduction of 1.3 percent since the 2nd Quarter. Five escrowed mortgages are currently delinquent; increasing insurance rates are likely a contributing factor to this number. Five accounts were paid in full during the quarter for a total payoff amount of \$78,010.38.
5. **Other Business – Executive Director Updates.** Mr. Smith provided updates as follows:
- a. **Habitat for Humanity Dedication.** Mr. Smith spoke about the article in the packet and stated that the home in the Creekside neighborhood in Greer is the first of four completed on lots GCRA donated to Habitat several years ago.
 - b. **Longterm Disaster Response.** Mr. Smith stated that the second meeting with the Greenville County Long-term Recovery Group was postponed due to the Table Rock wildfires. Additionally, staff will meet with South Carolina Office of Resiliency (SCOR) representatives soon to discuss working together on long-term recovery efforts in the state.
 - c. **County Councilmember Updates.** Mr. Smith stated that Phase I environmental clearances are still underway for the three properties GCRA hopes to receive from Greenville County. Staff and board members are trying to meet with each of the council members who serve on the County Finance Committee to present the benefits of deeding the three parcels to GCRA for the development of affordable housing.
- Mr. Smith stated that he has participated in an affordable housing tour with partner agencies to showcase affordable housing in the Upstate. Councilman Frank Farmer attended this tour; Mr. Smith is planning to speak with him further about GCRA projects.
- Discussion ensued regarding the current climate that includes reticence by some to support the development of affordable housing. It is critical to emphasize to County Council and other decision-makers that many citizens, even those with higher education, skills, and degrees, are still unable to afford housing under current economic conditions.
6. **Adjournment.** There being no further business and on a motion by Ms. Ernul, seconded by Mr. Hammond, the meeting was adjourned at 1:21 p.m.

WYFF – Greenville medical clinic faces closure after losing funding due to federal changes to DEI mandates

April 3, 2025



GREENVILLE, S.C. —

A medical clinic in downtown Greenville that serves the uninsured and those on Medicaid is facing a crisis as a major source of funding has disappeared, threatening its ability to stay open.

Unity Health on Main, which offers family practice, pediatrics, and women's health care primarily for the poor, may have to close its doors unless it can quickly make up the funding shortfall. The clinic's motto is "affordable, compassionate health care for all."

"We are that safety net for our families," said Norma Suarez, who highlighted the clinic's role in providing basic needs such as diapers, Tylenol, and diabetic syringes.

A recent email has put the clinic's future in jeopardy. "To let us know that all new funding is on hold or frozen until further notice," Suarez said.

Seventy percent of the clinic's funding is grant-driven, including a \$140,000 DEI grant for serving communities of color, which is now gone. Additionally, \$650,000 in federal money has been frozen.

"We serve over 2,300 patients and to know that that could be at risk or their medical home could be at risk was devastating to us," Suarez said.

In August, there is a chance for other private sources of funding. The current goal is to secure pledges, forgivable loans, or other grants totaling \$350,000. Without this money, the clinic may have to close, forcing patients to seek care elsewhere.

The hope now is for funds to bridge the gap so that Unity Health can continue to provide essential health care services to thousands of Greenville residents.

Greenville County is a hotspot for evictions. Could a special court for housing help?

BY CONOR HUGHES CHUGHES@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

APR 14, 2025



Greenville County councilmen Frank Farmer, far right, and Ennis Fant said they both fully support creating a housing court to alleviate the area's eviction crisis during GOAL Justice's April 10 Nehemiah Action event.

CONOR HUGHES/STAFF

Greenville County remains one of the worst counties in one of the worst states for eviction rates.

In the past year, landlords in the area have filed close to 15,000 notices, according to data from the [Princeton Eviction Lab](#). That's one for every five renters, setting Greenville County's rate at close to three times the national average.

[It's a longstanding issue in the area](#) that can have wide-reaching consequences for the renters it affects.

In South Carolina, eviction notices, whether they're upheld or not, remain on a tenant's record permanently and can make it nearly impossible to find suitable housing afterward. Evictions affect families disproportionately, and studies have shown they can negatively affect **school performance and mental health for the children** who experience them.

Local advocates and officials are hopeful that establishing a housing court for the county would help stem the tide of evictions by creating more access to legal services for evictees and offer a streamlined process that helps landlords and renters reach equitable solutions.

At an April 10 meeting hosted by the advocacy group GOAL Justice, two county councilmen publicly voiced their support for establishing that program in front of a crowd of more than 1,100 people.

For Councilman Ennis Fant, a Democrat representing District 25, it was a recommitment to a long-held policy goal. But for Republican Councilman Frank Farmer — who started his first term representing District 22 in January — the endorsement of the court program comes just a few months after he was first sworn in.

"The number of evictions we have is already way too high," Farmer said. "We don't want to see those numbers increase."

Farmer is one of four new Republican members of County Council sworn in during January after seismic changes in last year's primaries.

His support was met with swelling applause and cheers from the gathered members of GOAL, a coalition of 29 religious congregations focused on alleviating social issues in Greenville County.

The South Carolina Supreme Court created a housing court pilot program in 2019, establishing the program in Charleston County, which at the time had among the worst eviction rates in the state.

Eviction filings there have since fallen dramatically, down by close to 25 percent so far this year compared to pre-COVID averages, and housing court operations have continued to expand. Richland County, which has eviction rates well over the national average as well, also created a housing court after the program was established.

While the state's existing housing courts have some procedural differences, their core function is the same.

Tenants have the option to take their landlords to court after receiving an eviction notice. Ahead of each court date, legal aid and pro bono firms receive a docket and documentation for each case.

The day of hearings, attorneys are there to offer their services to potential clients who need it, discussing the details of their situation and helping them to navigate the legal system.

The April 10 gathering at Bethlehem Baptist Church, which marked GOAL's third annual Nehemiah Action, was in large part focused on promoting solutions to the area's eviction crisis. The group held up the creation of a housing court as an essential step.

"There is a dire need for an eviction court in our county," Felicia Smith of Valley Brook Outreach Baptist told the gathered crowd.

But the group also emphasized that there is legislation currently at the Statehouse that is crucial to Greenville County's eviction crisis. The two bills, one in the Senate and one in the House, would wipe an eviction off a tenant's record if a court finds in their favor in the case. The House bill would also automatically remove record of an eviction filing after six years.

Three members of Greenville County's Statehouse delegation — Democratic state representatives Chandra Dillard and Wendell Jones, and Republican state Sen. Jason Elliott — all affirmed their support for the legislation during that event.

"I've had too many calls from people in distress," Dillard said. "It is personal for me."

Elliott said the legislation has received bipartisan support at the Statehouse but it is unlikely it will be taken up this year. He said it is critical that local leaders continue to push for them before the end of the two-year legislative session in May 2026.

Follow Conor Hughes on Twitter at @ConorJHughes or reach him on his email at chughes@postandcourier.com.

CONOR HUGHES

REPORTER

Conor Hughes is a reporter for the Post and Courier Greenville