

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH  
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to Order at 7:05PM

**Open Public Meetings Act Statement:** In compliance with Chapter 213 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this Meeting was given by way of the Annual Notice published in the Trenton Times, Princeton Packet and are posted on the calendar at The Hightstown Borough Municipal Building by the Authority and posted in a public place reserved for such announcements in the lobby of the Community Building of the Housing Authority Office.

**Roll Call:** showed that those present and absent were as follows:

**Present:** Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director, Commissioner James Eufemia, Chair, Commissioner Jeet Gulati, Commissioner Eva Teller, Commissioner Terry Parliaros.

**Also, Present:** Sean McDonald, Jameelliah Lance

**Absent:** Mayor Larry Quattrone, Commissioner Rivenburgh

**Approval of Minutes:** Regular Meeting Minutes of March 16<sup>th</sup>, were presented. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Teller and seconded by Commissioner Gulati. Minutes were unanimously approved.

**Open Public Meeting:** At this time the public is invited and encouraged to participate in open forum. It is requested by the Chairman of the Board and the Commissioners of the Housing Authority that all comments and opinions be relevant and timely and be expressed in a manner which contributes to and advances the orderly progress of the meeting and for all concerned. The Chairman or presiding Commissioner may determine that it is necessary to limit the amount of time allotted to speakers from the public.

Jameelliah Lance attended the meeting as the new head of the Resident Council. Keith introduced everyone and thanked Jameelliah for attending. Several questions were asked of the board by Ms. Lance, especially as to why they are serving. It was discussed and agreed that we are all here to ensure this is one of the best communities in the area and we are providing some of the best housing for our resident.

**Borough Council Liaison Report:**

- None, Keith mentioned again to Sean and Jameelliah to include him on any emails to the Borough, as he will try and push the process along. He noted that we have had two vacancies, one for over 2 years now that has not been filled. The Resident Commissioner spot has been open for over 1 year now.

### **Committee Report:**

- **Personnel.** Jeet and Brent serve on the personnel committee, and with Brent not being at the meeting tonight Jeet wants to push the discussion until next month. It was agreed to move the discussion to the next meeting.

### **Resident Council Report:**

- Jameelliah discussed the Easter Egg hunt the Resident council conducted recently. Several residents got together and purchased the eggs, candy and spent the time filling the eggs and hiding them for the kids. We had a large turn out of kids for the Egg hunt, most of which were accompanied by parents. We had a wonderful and warm afternoon. Commissioner Eufemia questioned whether the HA could purchase the candy for the event. Keith said they can with receipts for the purchase. In the future the HA will purchase the candy/gifts for the parties. An annual BB Que was discussed. The Resident Council and the office will coordinate for an event toward the end of Summer. Keith suggested late August before everyone went back to school.

### **Resolutions:**

- **None**

### **Discussion Items:**

- **Capitol Items:** Keith presented both one Year (2022) and 5-year proposed capitol plans (2023-2027) These were developed as tools to promote discussion and give us direction in the coming years. As you can see the plans are aggressive and exceed the funding that is available. They also may not be all inclusive, and the Board may have other priorities. Keith asked the Board to please review the plans and let him know of any changes, additions, or deletions we may need to consider. Keith explained how its very important to have feedback from the Resident council on the Capitol projects and the priorities the Residents may have.
- **Emergency Grant Application:** Keith discussed the problems we are having with the infrastructure in the crawlspaces. Most of the piping is vintage piping that was installed when the buildings were built. Keith discussed the large number of valves that will be associated with the project. He estimates over 1200 valves will be needed for the heat and hot water systems. Due to the size of the project Keith reached out our local HUD offices, the Washington HUD offices, Congress, the Senate and Secretary Buttigieg for assistance. HUD Washington is very interested, and Keith has put together a 38-page package for them, detailing our needs, engineering estimates and photos. Keith spoke to our local field office this week, and everything has been accepted in Washington, with no comments to date. All of this has happened very quickly. We are hopeful we will get at least some, if not all the money requested.
- **Roofing Project:** Keith discussed the roofing project, which is now complete. All together we spent almost \$575,000 dollars to complete the project. Keith commented how the roofing materials alone have almost doubled in the past 6 months, and it was a very good move by the board to move forward with the entire project now, securing the 2021 price for the project. The only upcharge was for the plywood replacement that needed to be done. This cost almost \$80,000 in extras. Keith has had a discussion and is getting a proposal from the Architect to study and come up with a solution to the Air Sealing issue we have in each of the firewalls. This is where the plywood was deteriorated, due to warm moist air migrating through the walls. Keith mentioned that

this project will ensure long term stability. We installed "lifetime" warranty shingles on the roof, we should try and make sure the plywood underlayment lasts just as long.

- **Pilot Agreement:** Keith discussed the PILOT agreement that was moved from last months agenda to the month. The board discussed the pros and cons of escrowing the money until the Borough decides they have the time to discuss the issue with us. Commissioner Gulati feels we can wait, as the payment is not due until October 1. In the meantime, Commissioner Teller will reach out to a council person she knows and get some additional information.

#### **Executive Director Report:**

- We are currently at 97% Occupancy. We have completed a 2-bedroom unit and a one-bedroom unit for a tenant. Currently we are renovating a 3 bedroom and a 4-bedroom unit. We have outside people that have been notified and are waiting for the units. One problem we have run into is in the 3-bedroom unit. When the floor tile was put down, it was adhered with a black cement. The floor is literally coming up in tiny pieces. Some of the plywood is damaged so we are skimming several areas of the floor with a floor leveling compound.
- The plumbers are taking a hiatus while we finish the roofing.
- We had a major water issue that damaged one of our new boilers in building 1. The tenant (on the first floor) left the bathroom sink water running and went away for the weekend. The resulting flood ran into the boiler room and on one of the boilers. We are fortunate to have redundant systems, so no one was directly impacted. We called the boiler company who evaluated the boiler and gave us an estimate to repair the damage. I called the insurance company who fortunately covered the entire incident, minus the \$1 thousand dollar deductible.
- All the roofing has been completed. Soffits and facias are done on all buildings. Finishing pieces are being made for two area, each on the ends of building 4. Gutters are being installed and will continue as weather permits. Hopefully all work will be completed in April. We had all the heavy galvanized gutter protectors covering all the downspouts removed prior to the start of the project.
- We submitted a comprehensive package of materials to HUD for review and possible funding. The engineers were in and reviewed all the crawlspaces and have put together a comprehensive cost estimate for the project. At this point we are asking for approximately \$1.4 million dollars. I have been encouraged by calls from Washington looking at the project and by the speed it is being reviewed.
- The large tree by building 7 is hopefully being removed on April 25<sup>th</sup>. We will investigate replacing the tree later this year with a smaller variety.
- The wait list for 2,3,4-bedroom units is now open until June 30<sup>th</sup>. We still maintain a long list for the smaller units, so it does not make sense to add to that.

- We held a Vaccine booster clinic this past week. The local health department came in for 3 hours and administered shots. We had a long line of people, both from the HA and from the outside.
- Covid safety is still our priority. The outside lobby is now open to our residents, and currently holding outside meetings. We are watching the new variant that is spreading quickly. Adjustments will be made as we watch things progress. We are still not allowing outside people into the offices. The staff has all had the virus except Sherry. We are requiring both the positive and negative test results from each person, especially the negative test before they return to work.

### **Financial Update: March 2022**

In review of the financial reports for the months of March 2022, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with negative results mainly stemming from the payments on our projects. This winter has been full of unexpected surprises. Between the water leak and the downed tree costs there were several unexpected costs. April will be negative also, given the roofing costs and the annual pension payment.

#### **Income:**

- Residential income has come in slightly under budget for the period. This is mainly due to slight uptick in vacancy and new tenant incomes are much lower than previous tenants. Two of our tenants that died recently had extremely high incomes and paid market rents. HUD subsidies will recover eventually, Subsidies are based on 3-year average of resident incomes.
- Excess utility is under budget for the period.(wintertime)
- Interest income is below budget for the period.
- Other Operating receipts are over budget for the period. This is mainly due to the waste removal payments and money kept from security deposits used for maintenance.
- Laundry income is slightly over budget for the period.
- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the period. We will keep an eye on this as the year progresses as it is running above budget. We have received and booked the March and April subsidy and have submitted our budgets to HUD. From the subsidy calculations in the budget, it appears we may be receiving a slightly lower subsidy this year.

#### **Expenses:**

- Administrative salaries are under budget for the period. This trend will continue until the first 3 pay month (which is in July this year).
- Legal expense is over budget for the period. This is due to evictions and legal actions we are taking now that the State moratorium is off.
- Staff Training is on budget for the period.

- Travel is under budget for the month. We should not have any expenses until September when there is a conference in Washington, DC.
- Sundry Administrative is slightly above budget for the period. A majority of this is for the Generator monitoring agreement renewal.
- Computer supplies is under budget for the period. Any upgrades will be done in the fall of this year.
- Telephone is under budget for the period.
- Dues and Memberships are under budget for the period.
- Water is on budget for the year.
- Electric is under budget for the period. They have been doing estimates and will make adjustment as the year goes on.
- Natural Gas is slightly under budget for the period. The weather is moderating, and so are the bills.
- Maintenance salaries are under budget for the period.
- Maintenance materials is over budget for the period due to apartment renovations being done. We are currently renovating 4 apartments, and the flooring cost alone is over \$1 thousand per unit.
- Extraordinary maintenance is used for all costs that are outside the CFP funding and will be capitalized at the end of the year. Some of these costs are planned and approved items including the Architectural fees. The items here represent costs for plumbing repairs and replacement of the hot water storage tank in building 4. We also had roofing costs and architects' fees.

You will see a change in our financial position (Cash) in April. We are currently paying for the roofing project. When the 2022 Capitol money is available, we will discuss how much of that will reimburse the cash that was spent.

**Next meeting is scheduled for February 11<sup>h</sup> at 7:00**

The meeting was adjourned by a motion made by Commissioner Eufemia and seconded by Commissioner Teller.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director