

**MINUTES OF THE HIGHTSTOWN HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS
WEDNESDAY, January 6th, 2016 AT 5:00 P.M.**

Call to Order: Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to order at 5:03 P.M.

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: by Keith LePrevost showed that those present and absent were as follows:

- **Present:** Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director, Commissioner James Eufemia, Chair, Commissioner Esther Velázquez, Commissioner Carole Nelson, Vice Chair, Commissioner Pascale Emmanuel, Commissioner Christopher Moraitis, Commissioner Yolanda Swiney and Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh.
- **Also Present:**
- **Absent:**

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of: December 16, 2015. Commissioner Nelson motioned to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Velazquez and approved by the board.

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.

No members from the public were present.

Committee Reports:

- Appointment of Chairperson for 2016 Commissioner Velazquez nominated Commissioner Eufemia as Chair for 2016. Commissioner Nelson seconded the nomination which was approved by the board.
- Appointment of Vice Chairperson for 2016 Commissioner Velazquez suggested we rotate that position among the members each year so that everyone gets that experience. Commissioner Swiney nominated Commissioner Emmanuel as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Commissioner Rivenburgh and approved by the board.
- Reappointment of Commissioner Yolanda Swiney. Keith noted the Mayor was scheduled to come to our meeting to “swear” her into her second term, and he is not sure why he is not at the meeting.
- Introduction of 2016 Council Liaison. Keith noted that Denise Hanson will be the 2016 Council Liaison. She was not able to attend our meeting tonight.

Resolutions: None at this time.

Discussion Items:

- **Affordable Housing Plan Update:** Keith began by stating he hoped Steve Misiura from the Council would be in attendance, as he could provide a council perspective on the situation. The board had a lengthy discussion on where we are in the process, and what is being done currently. Keith discussed the recent teleconference he had with HUD and our attorneys. HUD has given our attorney very specific direction on what to communicate with the town and the Special Master. HUD is very surprised the HA has not been an integral part of the meetings and planning for affordable housing in the Borough and for submission of this plan. Keith explained he attempted to intervene in April of 2015 when the Planning board and Council began the planning process, and from that time forward all of their discussions were held in executive session. It was noted that the HA remains committed to helping the Borough in any way possible, we just must stay within the parameters of the Public Housing Program. Mr. Moriates feels there are personality issues that get in the way of positive communication. Mr. Rivenburgh feels we are on a positive track with the borough and we should have more information this week. Keith commented he has been assured by HUD we are on the right track, and they appreciate being kept in the loop and aware of the situation. Keith will report on the meeting with the borough to the balance of the board later this week.

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 99% occupancy. We have 1 vacant apartment that will be renovated starting this week. The new family will move in by the 3rd week of January.
- Office renovations will begin this month when the 1 apartment is completed. This includes new LED lighting, motion controlled switching, painting and flooring. We will also be working on air-sealing the windows in the office as a “test-run” before we begin that work around the campus.
- Ice melt has been purchased for the winter. All snow related equipment has been serviced.
- The truck is being serviced this month and we may need to consider new tires this year. Due to age and sitting outside the tires are beginning to crack.
- The 2016 budget that has been approved in Congress is near sequestration levels of funding, Capitol funding is being cut again.
- Our part time employee has returned back to work. We are glad to have her back.
- Training for the security camera system has been done in the coming week. We included Detective Miller and Detective Jimenez from the Police department into our training.
- We have received a copy of the Borough of Hightstown’s submission to the State for compliance with their affordable housing obligations. A copy was sent to HUD for their review and response. To date I have not heard from them.
- We have met with our Architect to begin the planning process for the replacement of our boiler systems and roofing on the property. This will be a 5-7 year process

which will be funded by capital and operating funds. We will be actively seeking County, State and Federal grants to cover as much of this work as possible.

- Our water and energy conservation efforts continue to benefit the HA and the overall community:
 - 3 consecutive years of reducing our water consumption from a historical average of 4.6 million gallons to a current average of 3.5 million gallons
 - 2 consecutive years of reducing our electrical usage by over 100,000KWH
 - 2 consecutive years of reducing our natural gas consumption by over 14,000 therms, or consuming 7.4 therms per degree day vs. our historical average of 11.53 therms per degree day.
 - Reducing the stormwater runoff from our site by approximately 748,000 gallons per year. When complete in 2016 our stormwater solution will retain over 1,000,000 gallons of stormwater per year.

Financial Update: December, 2015

In review of the financial reports for the month of December, 2015, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the month with positive results. Highlights include:

Income:

- Residential income has come in well above budget due to incomes of our residents, and the diligence of the staff to research and follow up when tenants either increase their work hours or find a new job.
- Excess utilities are freezer charges for the month.
- Other Operating receipts includes maintenance fees and refunds from our insurance company.
- Laundry income is slightly over budget for the month, an over budget for the year.
- Subsidy income is slightly over budget due to the Federal 2016 budget. We have operated this year under a continuing resolution for the past year, and that continues into 2016.

Expenses:

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are on budget for the month of December, and on budget for the year.
- Legal Expenses are under budget for the month but over budget due to review of court filings for the Boroughs affordable housing plans.
- Sundry Administrative is over budget for the year due to the OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) study that was conducted in preparation for our 2015 audit. HUD requires this study every 3 years.
- Audit Fees are under budget for the month, but on budget for this year.
- Electricity is under budget due to the unusually warm temperatures in November.

- Gas continues to be well below budget due to the radiator valve work done last year and our new purchasing agreement.
- Water is well over budget. I have been in touch with the Water department to review one of our meter readings. This past quarter, one of our meters was 50% higher than it has ever recorded. We discovered the problem was in 2 apartments with toilets that were running. One tenant has had a stroke and mild dementia, while the other tenant claims it has been running for months, but it still worked so they did not say anything. Those two toilet cost us over \$2,000 this past quarter. I have asked the water department if they can give us more frequent readings so we can spot problems more quickly.
- Misc. Maintenance supplies are over budget due to apartment turnover and renovations.
- Extermination costs are over budget due to bed bugs being treated in one apartment.
- Grounds maintenance is over budget due to semiannual gutter cleaning and maintenance.
- Maintenance contract costs are over budget due to cycle painting and concrete repair.
- Boiler Contract costs are over budget due to renewal of annual service contract.
- Extraordinary maintenance included the replacement of 2, 125 gallon hot water storage tanks that were leaking.

Announcements: The next meeting is scheduled for February 17th, 2016 at 7:00 pm.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by a motion made at 6:05PM.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director