

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HIGHTSTOWN HOUSING
AUTHORITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOUSING
WEDNESDAY, February 19, 2014 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Call to Order: Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to order at 7:00 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 Esther Velázquez, Commissioner James Eufemia, Chair, Commissioner Carole Nelson, Vice Chair, Commissioner Robert Hung, Commissioner Christopher Moraitis, Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh and Commissioner Yolanda Swiney.
- **Also Present:** Gail Doran, Council Liaison,
- **Public:** Charles Holland(resident), Susan Brooks(resident), Chester Diaz(resident), William Moody(resident), Bill Miller(resident).
- **Absent:**

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2014. Commissioner Moraitis motioned to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Velázquez and approved.

Committee Reports: None to report

Resolutions: None at this time

Discussion Items:

Strategic Plan. Keith discussed the 17 items that are included as “Administrative Goals” for the calendar year 2014. Many of the goals continue the work we have started in previous years and complete the modernization of our infrastructure and physical plant. We will continue to invest in the quality and energy efficiency of our units and public spaces and continue developing the overall appearance and curb appeal of the property. Commissioner Eufemia stressed the importance of continuing our work to improve the site and our apartments, Commissioner Swiney questioned whether we will actively pursue setting up a new Non Profit to look at other opportunities and developments. Keith responded that he feels it is important for our long term viability that we have the nonprofit set up and operating. Keith feels eventually HUD will be out of the business of “Housing Authorities” and will be turning these properties over to the local nonprofits. Commissioner Velázquez questioned the need for the “Homework Help” program. Keith discussed what has been done in the past and the challenges we faced. Commissioner Moraitis discussed existing programs and that there may be overlap with existing programs. Keith discussed the option of reaching out to the existing programs and making sure our residents are aware of them.

Executive Director Report: Keith discussed the following items.

- We are currently at 100% occupancy. We had an additional move out in January that has been filled.
- Two studio apartments have been refurbished this past month.
- The radiator valve project has been delayed due to the extreme weather. The heating contractor has been tied up with service work and will start this month. At this time I am encouraging a delay until the weather warms up. We will be able to shut down the boiler plants, drain the system and the overall installation will be much easier.
- Smoke Free housing signage has been installed around the property. Our policy went into effect on January 1. 4 additional signs have been received to complete all the buildings.
- We have begun the process of installing the LED lighting. 6 buildings are complete and we have received light fixtures for the last building and the office.
- I have begun the process of completing the GPNA for the Housing Authority. This is a timely process that is due at HUD by June 30, 2014, but will save us \$165 dollars per unit by doing the work ourselves and foregoing hiring a contractor to complete the tool. It involves detailing every physical asset on the property, establishing age of the product and projected remaining useful life expectancy. To date, I have inputted all 100 units, which will be reviewed again while we are installing the radiator valves, and the building exteriors, site, grounds and physical plants will be done in the coming month.
- I attended the PHADA conference this past month. This is one of the best conferences I have attended, with lots of good information and very welcoming people. I participated in a couple of sessions focusing on small housing authorities. I was asked to be on the Small Housing Authority committee starting with the next meeting in June.
- Our boiler service company is in process of installing the new controls for our boilers that are giving us greater reliability, and better control of our indoor temperatures. Once the radiator valves are installed, we should be operating as efficiently as possible.
- The snow is keeping the staff busy, making sure the walks and parking areas are clear of snow and ice. Ice melt will impact the budget if bad weather continues. Between overtime and ice melt, we have used almost all of our seasonal budget.
- I have been working with our architect to break the Well Baby clinic plans into the appropriate pieces so that we can begin the process of obtaining permits and bidding out the components. We should be able to begin construction in late March. The sealed plans will be filed with the Borough and bids are being received by the respective trades on the project.

- It is encouraging the Congress and Senate have established a budget for the next 2 years that has a modest increase in spending. We are looking forward to receiving our final allocation amount when HUD finishes their process.

Financial Update: January, 2014

In review of the financial reports for the period of January 1 to January 31, 2014, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the month with positive results. Despite having one of the coldest January's on record, our costs were below budget. Highlights include:

Income:

- Residential income has come in below budget due to turnover of 2 units.
- Laundry income is now up to budgeted levels.
- Subsidy income is now above budget due to the Federal 2014 budget.

Expenses:

- Salaries are within our budgeted levels.
- Staff training is over budget due to one registration for a Rutgers course.
- Sundry Administrative and Misc. Office expense is over budget due to the cost of attending the PHADA conference
- Gas and electric are under budget for the month.
- Misc. Maintenance costs are over budget due to the turnover of 2 apartments.
- Boiler contract costs are over budget and will increase over the next couple months. We have a new boiler contractor who has gone over our systems in great detail. I have proposal that cover the total cost of bringing our systems up to date and operating efficiently. We will be spending an additional \$8,600 over the next couple months upgrading the controls on the boilers so that they function according to the weather outside, the conditions inside and so that each pair of boilers works together to back each other up. We will also be doing repairs and replacement of parts that have been missed, neglected or undiagnosed by the previous contractor.
- Grounds maintenance is over budget due to bill left over from 2013 that was unpaid. The expense was carried into this year.

The enclosed financials include: Income Statement for the Current Period (VS Budget)

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.

Charles Holland spoke to the Commissioners expressing his dissatisfaction with the management and especially the Pet Policy. He feels the rules are enforced too strictly and he should not have had to get rid of the new dog he adopted. Keith explained the pet policy, limiting each resident to 1 animal of 20 lbs. or under. Charles was allowed to keep his 2 dogs- as he had them before the policy went into effect. One of Charles's dogs died, and Charles immediately replaced that dog with a large, 40-45lb. aggressive Pit Bull. The office was not notified, and the required paper work was never completed. Keith addressed the situation with Charles on 2 separate occasions, once after the dog aggressively threatened Keith and the other after another resident was threatened by the dog, and Charles did not remove the dog from the property. He was sent a final letter- that was read aloud by Commissioner Swiney. The board discussed the situation, and empathized with Charles loss, but agreed we must adhere to the pet policy, especially when it applies to the aggressive animals.

Charles was joined by Chester Diaz and William Moody in discussing the laundry rooms and the changes that were made. They feel it is unfair to not have hot water in the laundry, as hot water kills germs and bacteria. Keith agreed that hot water kills germs and bacteria, but reminded everyone that the water temperature must exceed 165 degrees to kill germs and bacteria. Our hot water averages 118 to 120 degrees maximum, so it would have no effect on germs and bacteria in our laundry facilities. Also, the trend nationally is for the use of cold water only in laundry, and the machines and detergents are designed for that. All of the commissioners commented they have not used hot water for laundry for years, as it wastes energy and does not clean any better. Mr. Moody explained that it is difficult for people to change, and so much has changed in the last couple years. He stated he did not like it when he got a brand new refrigerator, because he liked the old one- the freezer iced up, but it kept his ice cream frozen harder.

Chester Diaz does not like the new faucet aerators. He claims it takes his wife 5 hours to do the dishes at night. Keith discussed the water saving measures that have been utilized, and the significant savings- over \$1000 per month the Authority is saving just on water.

The commissioners thanked the residents for coming to the meeting and expressing their thoughts and opinions. The residents were encouraged to get involved and to get other residents involved in the community and participate on the Resident Council

Announcements: The next meeting is scheduled for March 19th, 2014 at 7:00 pm.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by a motion made at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director