

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, October 18th, 2017 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to Order.

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 Monique Wilson, Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh, Commissioner Christopher Moraitis and Commissioner Pascale Emmanuel.

Also Present:

Lee Stultz, Borough Council.

Absent:

Commissioner Yolanda Swiney

Commissioner Carole Nelson

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of September 20, 2017. The minutes were moved by Commissioner Rivenburgh, and seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

Borough Council Liaison Report: Lee Stultz gave an update on the council and the appointment of Dimitri Musing to an unfilled term. Keith continued to discuss the last council meeting and the praise we received from the council. Keith feels we may have turned a corner.

Resident Council Report: Monique gave the report on the first night meeting. Keith gave a good presentation on what he does and he answered several good questions, including solar energy, cable tv and internet access. The resident council was shocked and surprised by how much water we used and how much we are saving. Monique addressed the one “heckler” we had at the meeting, who is one of the biggest starter of rumors on the campus. The residents are very concerned with the HUD dollars, and the future. Keith’s explanation about the real cost of living here and the average subsidy families are receiving. Big Brothers and Big Sisters came and gave a presentation. It was really well received and we already have two volunteers. They are looking to get approximately 40 kids signed up. Monique got approximately 30 small pumpkins donated for the kids. They are arranging a “pumpkin painting party” Monique is encouraging the kids and families to go over to Stockton Street on Halloween night. Keith discussed use of our “Resident Services Fund”, which used to be used for the park programs. We could use up to \$2500 dollars per year for the Resident council. Monique mentioned a NAHRO training for development of the Resident Council. Keith stated that any training that is timely and appropriate is reimbursed by the Housing Authority.

Resolutions:

2017-10 To support the reappointment of Carole Nelson and Brent Rivenburgh to the Hightstown Housing Authority board of Commissioners, effective January 1, 2018. Commissioner Eufemia discussed the two members and their importance on our board. We have a group that consistently

meets, has good and lively meetings and are doing great work. Keith commented we have a great mixture of expertise on the board. We are different than most commissions in that we are dealing with people's lives, approximately 1M dollars per year, and a large physical plant. No other commission has the liability's we have and it's a pleasure to have a dedicated group to deal with this every month. The resolution was approved by roll call vote.

2017-11 To approve the filing of the State of NJ budget as presented. Keith stated he received comments from Carole and Yolanda on the budget. One comment was from Yolanda, who questioned the line item on "benefits". This \$86K line item is for pension liabilities and health insurance. Commissioner Eufemia questioned whether this budget still recognizes the excess cash, and maintains the approvals to utilize that money. The resolution was approved by roll call vote.

Discussion Items: Keith began by discussing the concept he developed this past spring on "Defederalizing Public Housing" Keith was invited by HUD and PHADA to attend a luncheon meeting in Washington. The goal is to come up with a streamlined process for small HA's to convert to a private, nonprofit. We can remain the HHA and accept a contract for 20 years to receive rental assistance. All income and subsidies would be considered nonfederal. Keith feels we are not currently counted in the Borough's affordable housing plan. Once converted, we would be able to enter into a contract with the borough. One interesting concept is to take some of our subsidies and use them on another site. Keith explained that if you look at our rent roll. Under the new plan, 25 of our resident's rents will go down, 50 families are right at or around the base rent level and 25 are desperately in need of subsidy. Keith feels this may be our opportunity to move out of HUD and into an innovative nonprofit. Commissioner Emmanuel questioned how the projects that have closed are working. Keith commented that about 47,000 units have closed and most are in their first year. She also asked whether we would consider tenant based subsidy instead of project based. Keith did not think that was the best idea, because we would have to turn our subsidy over to the County, who manages vouchers. Councilmen Stults feels this idea is positive, and there would be opportunity for the Borough to work with us. Commissioner Moraitis questioned whether this would change the project at Deerfield Westerlea. Keith noted that what is not being considered is the Mill. Councilmen Stultz agreed, the Mill is not counted in their current COAH number. Keith noted theoretically we could not only solve today's affordable housing commitment, but solve the future commitments as well. Keith feels it is important to work with the Borough to develop the structure that is appropriate and most beneficial to both parties. Keith feels the HA, with an affiliated nonprofit that would do all the day to day management. Commissioner Moraitis questioned the next steps. Keith noted he would like to submit a "letter of interest" with HUD that would put us on the waiting list for conversion. Then we would complete the full application after consultation with the planner and the Borough.

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 99% occupancy. We had a tenant move without notice the end of September. We are going to "right-size" a family to that unit and then renovate and fill the larger unit.
- We received our final subsidy determination for the balance of this year and fortunately it is somewhat higher than anticipated.
- The final batch of radiator covers are scheduled to be delivered this month.
- I received an email from HUD regarding our meetings and conversations while I was in Washington. HUD is offering us free consulting services from their preferred vender to review our HA and analyze our proposal. They are considering us for a hybrid- expedited conversion to multi-family.

- Also as a result of the above-mentioned meetings, HUD REAC contacted me and asked if I would consider helping and use our site as part of REAC's training of new inspectors. Today was the first of 2 days I am working with the REAC trainer and recruits to learn the systems and inspect property.
- We received our "River Friendly" award from the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed this month. The ceremony was at the Watershed and the 4 recipients were there. We are also being considered for a national award from NAHRO. The "Award of Merit in Housing and Community Development" is for our environmental achievements on an existing site. These awards, albeit mostly ceremonial provide Housing Authority's with positive press, and really highlight the local community that is supporting the HA's efforts.
- Our directional fences are being replaced with a more modern look.
- The federal subsidy budget tools are not available from HUD at this time. We will be completing them as soon as they are available.
- I have met with Leonard Coates regarding the Deerfield/Westerlea project and the Rogers/Academy overlay zone. We had a meeting planned for later this month, which has been delayed by the Borough.
- I attended the Planning Board meeting on October 11th regarding the development on Church Street. I voiced concerns with the storm water management plan and the parking. The developer has addressed some of these issues and the engineers have assured us their storm water calculations are correct and we should not see increased runoff from the site.
- All of the porches, balconies and stairs have been cleaned and power washed.
- Annual cycle painting has been completed.

Financial Update: September, 2017

In review of the financial reports for the month of September, 2017, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the month with slightly negative results as anticipated. The largest expense this period was the quarterly water bills and September was a 3-payroll month.

Income:

- Residential income has come in slightly over budget for the period.
- Excess utility is slightly over budget, bringing us into line for the year.
- Other income is over budget due to sale of plans and specification for renovation projects.
- Laundry income is slightly under budget for the period.
- Subsidy income is over budget due to the final acceptance of our 2017 budget. Adjustments have been made which will boost our subsidy income by around \$1500 per month.

Expenses:

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are over budget for the period and slightly over budget for the year. This is due to the second 3 pay month so far this year.
- Legal expense is on budget for the period.
- Staff training is slightly budget for the year. The recent change is the registration for the winter PHADA conference.
- Travel is slightly over budget due to the Washington conference in September and travel arrangements made for the winter conference.
- Audit is under budget for the period but on budget for the year.
- Dues and memberships are over budget due to annual dues for PHADA and NAHRO.
- Misc. Office Expense is under budget.
- Water is slightly under budget, but will come into line the end of this month.
- Electric is over for the period but under budget for the year.
- Natural Gas is under budget for the period.
- Maintenance supplies are over budget for the year due to purchasing of fencing materials.
- Exterminating costs are under budget for the period, and coming into line for the year.
- Grounds maintenance is over budget due to planting of seasonal flowers, aerating, seeding and repair of the lawns surrounding the sidewalk construction and cleaning the gutters on the entire property.

Next meeting is scheduled for November 15th, 2017 at 7:00 pm.

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

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director