

**MINUTES OF THE HIGHTSTOWN HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS
WEDNESDAY, June 21st, 2017 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Call to Order: Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to order at 7:04 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 Carole Nelson, Commissioner Christopher Moraitis.
- **Also, Present:** Resident Mary Stambo.
- **Absent:** Commissioner Pascale Emmanuel, Commissioner Yolanda Swiney, Commissioner Monique Dujue Wilson.

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of: May 17th, 2017. Motion to approve was made by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Rivenburgh and approved by the Commission.

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: The board discussed the committee structure. The only committee that will need to be meeting in the near future will be the Personnel Committee. Keith proposed renewing the E.D. contract with a fixed salary for the new term. This will fix this cost in place at today's rate for the next 5 years, stabilizing our budgets. Keith is concerned with the Federal funding stream, and this would help to stabilize our budgets going forward. There is a general consensus that our business will change in the near future and we need to be prepared and do what we can to preserve the Authority. The Commission agreed this is a good idea and Keith will mark up the existing contract, send it out to the Personnel committee- (Carole, Mickey) to consider for the next meeting. The main considerations will be the awarding of additional time off in lieu of any salary increases, how much and when its awarded.

Strategic Planning:

- Keith discussed the meetings we have been having with Deerfield and Westerlea. The Strategic planning committee has met with part of the Borough's Affordable housing committee and begun the conversation. Keith met with this week with the owner, Michael Pomeranc. They are proposing adding another 100 units of affordable housing. He is amenable to purchasing and using the entire Tournquist site and redeveloping it into whatever the town wants to see. Keith mentioned they have ordered full scale plans of the site and will begin to see how

the various scenarios will work out. Another benefit of the plan is that he is willing, with the other approvals purchase and redevelop Rogers and Academy with for sale, moderate income housing. We are looking at 15-18 townhomes held in a condo type ownership structure. Commissioner Moraitis is concerned with the density, and the character of the town. Keith noted this project literally could solve the Boroughs affordable housing issues for many years to come. Keith will keep the board up to date on the progress of this project. He mentioned the Strategic planning committee met, but with the budget as it is, it is very difficult for us to develop long range plans. We need to be able to plan and move based on the changing conditions.

- One of the Residents, Mary Stambo came into the meeting at this point. She discussed the parking situation. One of her friends, who is 80 years old came to visit and take her shopping. When they returned and were putting groceries away, her car was ticketed while parking in the lot. Keith explained how the parking regulations are being changed in the borough, and all the permit parking is being moved to the upper lot by Building 6. It was suggested the HA purchase 2 spots for HA guests- one-hour parking, or have two spaces marked off, parallel to the curb in front of building 6. Keith will work with the Borough on this issue.
- Summer Park program funding. In the past, we have historically given the Dawes Park program \$5,000 and the Methodist Madness program \$1,000. The board feels the HA should not be funding programs for the general population, but should focus our money on what will benefit our children the most. Commissioner Moraitis is very concerned we are subsidizing kids from out of town, or from other apartment communities. Keith recommended we give each program a basic \$1,000 and ask each program for a report on utilization of their program by the Housing Authority children. The commissioner discussed the merits and downsides of each of the programs and agreed to give to each with the request for an end of season report. A determination will be made each year based on utilization. Commissioner Moraitis asked why we could not sponsor our kids specifically by giving them a stipend for attending a program. The money we give to the programs would go a long way to individually sponsoring each kid. Keith will look into and talk to other directors on how they fund the summer programs and encourage the kids to participate. We will work on creating a program for the next summer season.

Resolutions:

2017-4 To Approve the Annual Audit. A motion was made by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Moraitis. The motion was approved.

2017-5 To Reject the bids for the boiler replacement. Keith discussed the boiler bids. The low bid was approximately \$640K, almost double our budget. The engineers are going to relook at the specification and rebid the project in the fall. Another problem is the amount of work in the marketplace. The contractors are busy, which drives up the price. The money is committed, so we do not have to worry about it being recaptured. Keith discussed breaking the project up, and doing 2 of the 3 now, but would like to see them all done at once. The motion to reject the bids and to rebid the project was approved with a roll call vote.

2017-6 To accept the contract for the refurbishing of the parking lots. Keith discussed the bid process for the parking lots and bringing up to code all of our handicap ramps including the ramps that cross Rogers Avenue. We were budgeting \$50K for the project, so we are close. The engineers are doing their due diligence on the contractors and they will be able to begin within the month. The motion was approved with a roll call vote.

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 100% occupancy.
- We received our final subsidy determination this month and fortunately it is somewhat higher than anticipated.
- Our annual audit has been completed and submitted to HUD. The audit has come back without findings or recommendations.
- Our boiler prices came back between 550K and 1.2M. The engineers are looking at the specifications and we have received several comments from the contractors. With modifications and a new round of public bidding this fall.
- We have ordered another batch of radiator covers that are scheduled to be delivered this month.
- We received notice we have received our “River Friendly Business Certification” from the Watershed association. There will be an award presentation sometime this summer. We are one of the first in Mercer County to win this certification, joining company’s like J&J, Duke Farms, and Bristol Meyers Squibb in their efforts to protect the environment. Another business pursuing certification include Meadow Lakes in Hightstown
- Our fifth resident satisfaction survey went out in May and we had 15 surveys completed and returned! This survey was just about the resident. All of the respondents would recommend our community to their friends! The surveys have been a good experience for both the residents and the staff, both to get feedback, and to let the residents voice their likes and dislikes.
- Edging and mulching of the grounds has been completed for the year. We have 2-3 large Pin Oaks that are going to be removed. Two are on RR Avenue, in front of building 6. They are diseased and failed to come out this year. The third is near the office, on the end of the Rain Garden. This is a very expensive process, but necessary.
- The resident gardens are doing well this year, and so far, it appears everyone is sharing the space. We will need to expand the gardens later this year to allow for more planting space.
- As part of the PHADA small housing authority committee, I have been asked to draft a plan which I have titled- “Small PHA’s Deregulation- De-Federalization of Eligible PHAs”. This plan, if enacted would remove us from the Public Housing program. A handful of Directors from across a broad spectrum of properties were asked to prepare position papers that will be reviewed and discussed at a joint meeting of NAHRO, PHADA and CLAPHA in late June.

Financial Update: May, 2017

In review of the financial reports for the month of March, 2017, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with negative results as anticipated. The largest expense this month was the insurance premiums for the year which total about \$35 thousand dollars.

Income:

- Residential income has come in slightly over budget for the period.
- Excess utility is slightly under budget due to cooler than expected temperatures.
- 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 on budget due to the final acceptance of our 2017 budget. Adjustments will have to be made to this budget item now that the Government has passed a full year CR. HUD has come out with a new proration for the balance of the year that will boost our income by around \$1500 per month.

Expenses:

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are under budget for the period and on track for the year.
- Legal expense is on budget for the period.
- Staff training is on budget for the year.
- Travel is for the PHADA conference in May.
- Audit is over budget for the period but on budget for the year.
- Misc. Office Expense is under budget.
- Water is under budget, but bills are expected later this month.
- Electric is under for the period.
- Natural Gas is under budget for the period.
- Maintenance supplies are over budget for the year due to renovations of 2 apartments.
- Small tools are over budget due to the purchase of a new power washer to clean the balcony's and steps.
- Grounds maintenance is over budget due to planting of annual flowers, mulching the entire property and cleaning the gutters on the entire property.
- Extermination costs are over budget for the period due to the annual termite inspections.
- Extraordinary maintenance is a third installment payment for the boiler engineers.

Announcements: The next meeting is scheduled for July 19th, 2017 at 7:00 pm.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by a motion made at 8:45PM.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director