

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, May 20th, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to Order at 7:00PM

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 Yolanda Swiney, Commissioner Eva Teller, Commissioner Jeet Gulati and Commissioner Monique Wilson, Resident

Also, Present: Jameeliah Lance (Resident)

Absent: Borough Council Liaison, Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of February 19th, 2020. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Swiney and seconded by Commissioner Wilson. 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.

Jameeliah Lance and Monique Wilson spoke at this point. Monique discussed turning over the daily activities of the Resident Council to Jameeliah due to Monique's work schedule. Jameeliah discussed the Easter Baskets and the distribution of the baskets. They were greatly appreciated by the kids and parents. Monique questioned why no one responded to her emails regarding the staff and working during the Pandemic. Keith discussed in detail the measure that were being taken by the staff and policies that have been put in place since the pandemic. Monique has spoken to all the staff and feel they are not comfortable with the current work environment. Keith discussed the Public Notice Standards and how emails constitute public notice when distributed to entire groups. Each member legally should not have responded to the email. The meeting is the appropriate place to discuss these issues. The board had a lengthy discussion on the issue and agreed a new policy needs to be put in place where all the staff must wear face

protection when on the property of the HHA. Keith agreed and will provide the policy and speak with each staff person the next morning.

Resident Issue. Monique and Jameeliah expressed the resident council want a certain resident evicted. Keith discussed the eviction laws and how many of the laws are skewed toward the tenant. One major problem is that most residents that come forward with a complaint will not fill out or sign a complaint against the Resident. Most do not want to get involved or put their name on anything. This leaves the managements hands tied. Without first-hand testimony, evictions are exceedingly difficult. Complicating the issue included a Tenant throwing a flowerpot against the residents door, prompting a call to the police. The resident always calls the police first, playing the victim. Keith suggested the issue be handled thoughtfully, with documents. Jameeliah and Monique agreed.

Borough Council Liaison Report:

- None- Not present

Committee Report:

Resident Council Report:

- See above

Resolutions:

- 2020-5 To Select W.M. Smith as the boiler contractor for Building #7. Keith discussed how this is the final boiler room to be done, with W.M. Smith being chosen with a \$400 dollar margin. All the equipment is being stored on site to insure a smooth and relatively quick project. The start date is June 1. The board approved the resolution
- 2020-6 2020 Capitol Plan. Keith presented the 2020 capitol plan to the board and the reasoning behind each cost. The plan was approved by the board.

Discussion Items:

- None currently

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 97% occupancy. We have interviewed and have a handicapped tenant moved into this unit at the end of April. This is also our test unit for the new kitchens. The space has been redone with new flooring, all electrical work and painting. The cabinets are installed and a new tile backsplash. We are taking the extended timeframe into consideration for the new units. Another one bedroom has become available. The tenant died and we will get the unit back by the end of the month.
- New signs have been placed by the recycling dumpsters with new recycling instructions going out to tenants every week. Contamination has not improved. I look at the recycling container several times per week.
- The new cabinets look great. The maintenance men installed the new cabinets, counters, flooring, and appliances. All the handicap units will be done this year. The first unit is done, and we are moving into the community room kitchen as we

speaking. We have a one bedroom that has been vacated that will be done when things open up.

- The office kitchen has been delivered. We have completed the kitchen after an extensive remodel. As expected, we needed to run 4 new circuits into the kitchen, repair the walls and floor, install a new closet and of course all new cabinets. The problem is getting countertops and ordering the new kitchen. Everything is still shut down due to the governor. I am hopeful things loosen up in the coming weeks so we can continue working. The guys have done a beautiful job with the kitchen that has been completed.
- The generators have been bid and 3 new units installed. We are adding a new feature that will allow the maintenance company and us the ability to remotely monitor and diagnose each unit. This will insure quick and accurate service each time they come out. The new units look great and will offer service for many years to come.
- The boilers for building 7 have been put out to bid for the second time. We have selected the low bidder on the project and the work is scheduled to begin on June 1. The initial payment has been made on the performance bond and the garage has been cleaned out for material storage. Work will begin when the existing boilers are shut down.
- We have communicated with the attorney regarding the PILOT payment. At this time, we have not heard anything from the Borough.
- All our legal affairs will be turned over to Leland Hutchinson in the coming months. We have worked with Leland in the past with great success. Leonard is retiring after a long career and we wish him well. Leland is fully up to date with all our affairs and the transition will be effortless.
- The novel Coronavirus is on everyone's mind. We discuss it as a staff and are taking a more traditional approach, wash your hands often, keep your hands away from your face, stay out of crowds and avoid being around anyone who appears sick. As a service industry, we are unable to avoid being at work. We are all working split shifts, morning and afternoon so that we are here for the residents and able to handle. Starting on May 1 we are beginning to open daily from 9-3 each day. We are maintaining the social distancing and remaining vigilant until told otherwise by the Governor.
- We have made significant efforts but are unable to keep our residents apart, especially the children. Parents have been called, notices printed and delivered door to door, but people will do what they choose to do. Several parents have told us to "mind our own business" and to "leave the parenting to them". Many parents are tired of being cooped up with the kids, between home schooling and lack of social activities so an hour or so of quiet time with the kids outside is a welcome respite.

Financial Update: April 2020

In review of the financial reports for the month of April 2020, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with negative results. Decreases in cash come from payments made on March 31 for Water and Sewer expense and April 1st-Employer pension payments were due. This accounted for more than \$50 thousand dollars.

Income:

- Residential income has come in slightly under budget for the period and over budget for the year, mostly due to increased resident incomes and actively monitoring new hires and tenant work status.
- Excess Utility is under budget for the period and slightly under budget for the year.
- Interest income is slightly below budget for the period and the year. Interest does not get posted to the account until after the 15th of the following month. We are continuing to monitor interest rates and will renegotiate our savings rate as warranted.
- Other Operating receipts are slightly over budget for the period.
- Laundry income is over budget for the period and slightly over budget for the year.
- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the year. The current payment is for part of March and the balance is for April. May and June will be short of our budgeted amount which will bring this account into line.

Expenses:

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are both on budget for the period.
- Legal expense is slightly under budget for period and for the year.
- Staff Training is under budget for the period and the year.
- Travel is under budget for the period and the year.
- Sundry Administrative is under budget due to several factors.
- Dues and Memberships are over budget due to renewals of memberships to National trade organizations.
- Water is slightly over budget for the period.
- Electric is under budget for the period.
- Natural Gas is under budget for the period.
- Maintenance materials is slightly under budget for the period.
- Maintenance contract cost are well under budget.
- Plumbing Contract costs are over budget due to drain cleaning emergency.
- Electrical Contract costs are slightly over budget for the period but over budget for the year due to generator additions needed after the new installation and contract for annual servicing.

- Grounds maintenance is slightly under budget for the year.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 17th, 2019 at 7:00

The meeting was adjourned by a motion made by Commissioner Swiney, seconded by Commissioner Gulati.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director