

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, June 16th, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to Order at 7:05PM

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 Brent Rivenburgh, Commissioner
Eva Teller,

Also, Present: Terry Parliaros, Tia Fitch, Tonya Bell, Stephan McCall

Absent: Commissioner Jeet Gulati

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of May 19th, 2021. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Rivenburgh and seconded by Commissioner Teller. 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.

Tia Fitch spoke first (Apartment 1-24). Is seeking clarification on rule that residents need to provide information to the office regarding people staying in their apartment. Keith clarified that the office is very conscious of everyone's privacy and tries to respect that in every instance. This is why much of what we do is never seen or noticed by others in the community. We have an obligation to follow up on every letter and call we get, whether its about illegal dumping, someone smoking or people that appear to have moved in. The HA pays all the utilities for every apartment, whether it is water and sewer, electric or gas for heat and hot water. We monitor and are constantly looking at those costs. It is important because every person that lives here pays rent. That rent helps to pay the bills for that apartment and its unfair to have people living here, using the utilities and not paying their fair share. Plus, it overcrowds the apartment unit. A long discussion ensued with the board and Tia. It was concluded that Tia will provide current information as to the mother and Father's current address. **Stephan McCall** spoke next. He was questioning the garbage policy, ability to do work for money in another person's apartment, and how he can move into his mother's apartment. Keith reiterated the rules that he reminded is in every person's lease, the Tenant Handbook and the ACOP it is clearly stated that any alterations to the apartment unit must be done with the management's approval and any and all alterations must be put back to the original condition when the tenancy ends. Stephan claims he and the tenant were unaware of the rules and he has repainted and apartment, put in new cabinets and flooring for a tenant. He feels it is our fault for not doing regular inspections. Keith mentioned

that full apartment inspections are scheduled for this month, after HUD dictated that we do not enter units for the last 16 months. Stephan then went on to complain about the wait list and moving into his mother's apartment. Keith reiterated that there is a waitlist and a process for getting an apartment. His mother is scheduled to move down to a one-bedroom apartment now that the sister has permanently moved. Stephan feels that would be perfect as he can take his name off the wait list and take over her unit. It was made clear that is not how the process works. Stephan then went through a process of trying to use the Housing Authority's rules to allow him and his son to live here a couple days at a time to avoid the need to report the guest to the office. Once again, the board informed him there are rules to follow.

Borough Council Liaison Report:

- None

Committee Report:

- Policy Review
 - ACOP- Keith discussed the policy was from last meeting and if the board had any comments or changes. No comments were received
 - Resident Council Bylaws. Keith described the policy as required by HUD. The policy was sent out to the Committee and no comments have been received. We will discuss at the July meeting.
 - Tenant Services Fund. Keith described the policy as required by HUD. The policy was sent out to the Committee and no comments have been received. We will discuss at the July meeting.

Resident Council Report:

- None

Resolutions:

- None

Discussion Items:

- None

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 100% occupancy. Currently, we do not have any new notices to move out.
- All the porches and stairs have been cleaned and power washed. After the long winter they needed a good cleaning.
- All the summer flowers have been planted and mulched for the year. Unfortunately, this has been one of the driest springs in recent history, so the guys have been watering every morning.
- Many of the trees and bushes have been trimmed and shaped around the campus. Any tree branches that are near the buildings have been trimmed back. All the trees in the courtyard will be cut back in the fall.
- Apartment inspections are being done the end of June. This is the first time we will be able to get into the units in well over a year due to the pandemic. All precautions are being taken and residents are asked to leave the unit whenever possible.

- We have been told by the Police not to notify the mayor any longer of garbage or criminal activity. They explained the mayor does not have any police powers and notifying him is a waste of time. Now we must call the non-emergency number and file a complaint for them to do anything.
- The boilers have all been put in Hot Water only mode for the summer. This is a simple process of turning off the pump controllers and closing the supply lines. This prevents any hot water from migrating into the system. One problem is we had a very cold weekend, luckily, we had very few calls and things warmed back up.
- The gutters have all been cleaned and inspected.
- The outside of building 2 has been redone. The overgrown Cryptomerias were removed and replaced by more manageable trees that will not get that tall. This will help to eliminate the squirrel problem. We installed a new Magnolia, a Red Bud and a Crabapple tree on the 3 affected corners.
- The maintenance staff replaced approximately 9 LED fixtures that are on the outside of the buildings. It has been almost 7 years since we installed all the lights, and the fixtures fail over time.
- Covid safety is our priority. Now is the time we are all re-doubling our efforts to stay safe. New guidance from the State is beginning to relax all the restrictions. We continue to reinforce to the staff vigilance as the best course to take. As a service industry, we are unable to avoid being at work. We are maintaining the social distancing and remaining vigilant until we are down to 0 cases in Mercer County!

Financial Update: May 2021

In review of the financial reports for the month of April 2021, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with positive results. The month was bolstered by the Stimulus payments that most of our residents received and increased funding from HUD.

Income:

- Residential income has come in well over budget for the period and over budget for the year. This is mainly due to conservative budgeting and the effects of the Stimulus. Some residents have paid their rent in advance using the money.
- Interest income is below budget for the period. This is mainly due to the low interest rate environment.
- Other Operating receipts are slightly over budget for the period. This is partly due to the waste removal payments we have been receiving and for money left from repairs needed after a move out.
- CFP for operating has been received, just posted by journal entry separately.
- Laundry income is under budget for the period, and slightly under for the year.

- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the period. We will keep an eye on this as the year progresses as it is running well above budget. We have received the May-June subsidy which is well above our estimates(almost \$10K per month). The Government finalized the 2021 budgets and subsidies. We have not been given any indication as to prorations for 2021, but the overall amounts have been approved. I will keep you up to date as the year progresses.

Expenses:

- Administrative salaries are under budget for the period. We had a Our next 3 pay month is in July, which will affect our budget going forward.
- Legal expense is slightly over budget for the period and slightly over budget for the year due to eviction letters being sent out.
- Staff Training is slightly under budget for the period and the year. This will come in line with the new Board Member when approved.
- Sundry Administrative is slightly under budget for the period, and slightly over for the year.
- Telephone is under budget for the period and the year.
- Travel is well under budget for the period due to the virus.
- Dues and Memberships are under budget for the period but over for the year due to license and association renewals.
- Water is on budget for the year.
- Electric is under budget for the period. They have been doing estimates for 10 of the last 12 periods, so we ended up with a credit.
- Natural Gas is under budget for the period and under for the year. We had a very cold spring, and we have done well, running at the low end of our expectations.
- Maintenance salaries are over budget for the year due to overtime costs and a 3rd payroll in January.
- Maintenance materials is over budget for the period and over budget for the year due to apartment renovations being done. Money is spent at HD Facilities and Home Depot for materials including new flooring, switches, outlets, cover plates and smoke detectors. for the units.
- Electrical contract costs are over budget due to the “squirrel repair” that was done.
- Ground’s maintenance is over budget due to the cost of eradicating our “squirrel” problem. Now that everything is done, I do not think anyone misses the Cryptomerias and sees what we have done.
- Extraordinary maintenance is used for all costs that are outside the CFP funding and will be capitalized at the end of the year.

Next meeting is scheduled for July 21st at 7:00

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

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director