

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, September 15th, 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 Brent Rivenburgh, Commissioner Eva Teller, Commissioner Jeet
Gulati, Commissioner Terry Parliaros

Also, Present: Scott Castor, Meg Rosner

Absent: Borough Council Liaison, Commissioner Yolanda Swiney

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of June 16th, 2021. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Teller and seconded by Commissioner Parliaros. 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.

Keith mentioned he spoke to one of our tenants that is having a problem with another tenant. He advised them to get a police report if there is an incident. Without paper documentation it is very difficult to evict someone.

Borough Council Liaison Report:

- None

Committee Report:

- Policies:
 - Resident Council Bylaws
 - Resident Council Funds
- Both policies were reviewed in June to be approved in July. The board approved both policies as written. Keith will go ahead and publish them for Resident comment and they will be included in our policies after that period.

Resident Council Report:

- Keith spoke briefly about the one tenant that has been causing some commotion. The other residents have been advised they need a police report before we can do anything to him.

Resolutions:

- **2021-5** To Award the roofing contract to VMG Group for a total cost of \$447,000.00 dollars broken down into 3 alternates. Alternate 1 is approved at \$198,000 and will cover buildings 3,4 and 5. Building 1,2,6 and 7 will be done as soon as funds are available.
- **2021-6** To award the refurbishing contract to Balanikas Painting for a total of \$85,725.00 to strip, sand and repaint the metal stair stringers and replace damaged concrete stair treads where needed on all 25 exterior stairs as designed by the DRG group, architects for the project.
- **2021-7** To reject all bids submitted for the Solar project designed by the DRG Group.
- **Discussion Items:** The Board discussed the three resolutions listed above in detail. Agreement was reached that the Solar project should wait for now as the long-term costs and maintenance would make the project less affordable. The Stairs and Roofing projects both directly impact the residents in a positive way and will extend the life of the property well into the future. All three resolutions were unanimously approved as written.
- **Cooperation Agreement.** Jeet and Eva will get together and approach the mayor to hopefully get the agreement signed. The 2020 payment will be split in two parts, \$30,799.63 will be paid to the Borough and \$6,237.37 will be deposited into our Attorney Trust account until the agreement is signed. Keith mentioned this is the second year we have been working on this and the second payment we are making into the Trust account.

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 99% occupancy. We received a 2-bedroom unit from a tenant that is moving in with their son who has become a doctor (and lived here while in school) We have completely renovated the unit including new flooring. We have a long list of candidates for the unit which was occupied on September 1. We will have a 3-bedroom unit coming back to us soon. The tenant is buying a house, but she is undergoing Chemo treatments. She is staying here until her treatments are complete. That unit will also be completely redone. We have a 3 bedroom that was recently vacated by a tenant who got an apartment locally. The unit is being completely redone.
- Annual apartment inspections have been done. It has been almost 2 years since we were able to inspect, and several issues were found. Unfortunately, they are focused mainly on increased clutter and general cleanliness. All the work orders produced have been completed. Surprisingly we only had 52 work orders resulting from the inspections.
- A warm welcome to our newest board member, Terry Parliaros. We enjoy your mother's tenancy with us, and we will certainly enjoy having Terry as a board member.
- We had a major tank failure in building 7. We have two 120-gallon tanks that store our recirculating hot water. One of the tanks developed a major leak, which we were able to control and isolate that tank. Fortunately, the water heater and the one tank satisfy the two buildings demand. Mack industries has been called and they replaced both tanks and removed the old ones. Unfortunately, it appears

the building was built around the tanks, so they had to be cut apart to be removed. The new tanks will require the temporary removal of some railings and electrical(only for the sump pumps)

- We have an emergent situation we are taking care of. We had a major crack and failure of one of the concrete beams that support a stairwell. Fortunately, it has not affected the structure. We have called in an engineer who has devised a plan to repair the damaged areas. A temporary support structure has been erected and caution tape was installed to keep people away. We have a mason contractor that is going to repair the damage.
- The roofs, stairs and solar installation have been put out to bid. We held pre-bid meetings in August for the projects and had several contractors look at the project. We have received the bids on the projects and would like to move forward in the following way:
- The Auditors have been in and completed their annual audit. We are fortunate to come through with 0 finding and recommendations! The completed audit gives us the final number to pay for our PILOT agreement. Once again, I would like to draft 2 checks for the PILOT. One will be sent to the Borough, and the second which will equal the cost of the recycling we will deposit in the Attorney escrow account. Without a signed agreement from the Borough, I think this is the safest way to handle the situation.
- We installed a new rain garden on the end of Building 1 behind the resident gardens. This takes all the water from the end of building 1 and redirects it into the rain garden. With several heavy rains since its installation, it has proven to work very well. The area was replated with several perennials and a Dogwood tree.
- We have several plants that have not done well in newly landscaped areas. Although well-watered, the heat and time of year they were planted has not been ideal. The landscaper has agreed to remove and reinstall new plants in the fall.
- The boilers have all been put in Hot Water only mode for the summer. We are researching the cost of installing new Lochinvar hot water heaters in the two boiler rooms so that we can shut down the main boilers in the summer. This appears to reduce our natural gas consumption by not having to run the hot water through the heat exchanger.
- The Annual boiler servicing has been scheduled for October. All 6 boilers will be cleaned and serviced.
- The main plantings outside of building 2 has been redone. The overgrown Cryptomerias were removed and replaced by more manageable trees that will not get that tall. Several of the bushes will be trimmed way back in the fall once the leaves die back.

- All the trees in the Courtyard will be cut back this fall. This keeps the trees away from the buildings and keeps their height down below the roof line. They look bad at first, but quickly grow back in the springtime.
- 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 still our priority. The outside lobby have been reopened to our residents and it feels good to be getting back to “normal” We have been discussing and are concerned with the increase in cases being reported. We are actively watching the variants that are out there and we are prepared to reinstate protective measures as needed.
- We received the unfortunate news that our long-time commissioner Yolanda Swiney has sold her home and will be moving out of the area. Thank you for her service to us in the past and we are wishing her the best of luck in the future.

Financial Update: June, July, August 2021

In review of the financial reports for the months of June, July and August 2021, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with positive results. The spending in the “Extraordinary Maintenance” category are for the Architect(\$32,245)(planned) and the hot water tanks(\$16,153)(emergency)

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.
- Excess utility is over budget for the period and the year.
- 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 Over 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 have our next 3 pay month in July, which will affect our budget going forward.
- Legal expense is slightly under budget for the period and slightly under budget for the year.
- Staff Training is slightly over budget for the period and slightly under for the year. This will come in line with the new Board Member when he begins taking classes.
- Travel is over budget for the month, but well under for the year. This cost is for the hotel fee for the September conference.
- Audit is scheduled for August this year. It has been delayed due to the State updating the pension system's actuarial tables.
- Sundry Administrative is slightly under budget for the period, and slightly over for the year. This is mainly due to two major software systems that renew in January.
- Telephone is under budget for the period and the year.
- 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 over budget for the period. They have been doing estimates for 10 of the last 12 periods, so we ended up with a credit on the last bill. This month we were slightly higher.
- 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 under budget for the period, but over budget for the year due to overtime costs.
- 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. Some of these costs are planned and approved items including the Architectural fees.

One question the Board needs to consider is the handling of this year's PILOT payment. Last year we deposited 2 checks with the Attorney, one for the basic PILOT and the

other for the recycling cost. On October 1 we should pay the Borough the 2020 PILOT. A decision needs to be made whether to pay the full amount? pay the basic PILOT minus the recycling? and if so what do we do with the recycling money? I would suggest we put it in the Attorney trust account along with last years until the Borough is able to consider and sign a PILOT agreement.

Current payment \$37,037. Recycling Cost \$6,237.37

2 Checks, \$30,799.63 to Borough of Hightstown, \$6,237.37 to Attorney Trust Account.

Next meeting is scheduled for October 20th at 7:00

The meeting was adjourned by a motion made by Commissioner Eufemia.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director