

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, March 16th, 2022 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 Jeet Gulati, Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh, Commissioner Eva Teller, Commissioner Terry Parliaros.

Also, Present: Sean McDonald

Absent: Mayor Larry Quattrone.

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of January 19th. 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.

Sean McDonald attended the meeting after being asked by Commissioner Parliaros. Sean is considering joining our board. Keith discussed the forms that are needed by the Borough. Keith will again reach out to Peggy to get him approved as a commissioner.

Borough Council Liaison Report:

- None- Keith was contacted in writing that the Borough Council does not have the time to have a discussion with the Housing authority. Keith recommended we make the annual PILOT payment to the attorney escrow and inform the Borough we will release the money when they have time to discuss the issue with us. The Board discussed the issue and other affordable housing issues, including the Deerfield property and Tournquist.

Committee Report:

- None

Resident Council Report:

- Keith discussed the vaccine clinic we are holding and how the residents and residents appreciate having the clinic here. The Health Department is also very grateful for us and our willingness to open our doors to them.

Resolutions:

- None

Discussion Items:

- **Emergency Repairs.** Keith discussed the various repairs that are needed in the crawlspaces including replacing the piping, valves, unions, etc. Commissioner Teller asked which buildings are in need, Keith explained it is all of them. Keith discussed the Emergency Grant application he is filing. He is looking to ask for approximately 1.5 million dollars. Keith discussed a repair that was attempted. When the plumbers tried to repair one pipe, it collapsed, and a long section needed to be replaced. Keith discussed the underground leak, how it was discovered and eventually fixed. Unfortunately, it turned out to be around \$20 thousand dollars just to fix that leak. Keith discussed the difficulty replacing these pipes, including running parallel systems initially and then doing limited shutoffs each day.
- **Roofing** The roofing project is substantially done. The soffit and fascia work is moving along and will hopefully be finished in the next month.
- **Pilot Agreement** Keith discussed the PILOT agreement and his response to the Borough. He did not send the letter to the Borough, as he felt it would fall on deaf ears. The Board discussed the issue, including payment of both the Recycling and PILOT. Keith explained the discussion he had with the Mayor after the Mayor had the HHA's recycling stopped and was going to speak to the Council about stopping waste removal at the HHA also. The resolution to withhold the payments to the Borough is being held for the April meeting.

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 97% Occupancy. We refurbished a 3-bedroom unit from a woman who is getting married and moving to the other end of the building! We ran into problems with the bathroom drain being clogged, which took the plumbers to repair. The dielectric union in the crawl space went bad causing terrible corrosion that eventually blocked the line. A woman from the 3rd floor of that building moved down to the first floor. The 2 bedroom she was in is being redone. We had a tenant move back up to north Jersey March 1, so we got this three-bedroom unit back. We will be right sizing a family from a 4-bedroom unit when it is done. We had 2 young elderly people die in February. We will redo those two units and right-size a woman from a 3-bedroom unit to one and pull someone from the waiting list for the other. We have people on the waiting list for all the units we are right sizing.

- When the plumbers were fixing the clog under building 5, they started to repair a 2 inch heating pipe that was leaking. The pipe basically crumbled in their hands when they started to work on it and it had to be replaced. This is typical of the problems we are facing.
- We had a major leak outside of building 2. Everything has been repaired except the landscape(which will be done in the spring). We have requested from HUD and the Federal government approximately 1.5 million dollars for the rehabilitation of all the crawlspace piping. We had a good meeting with the Newark and Washington representatives and will be filing the application they requested on 3/21.
- The roofs on building 3,4,5,6 and 7 have been completed. The roofers still need to do the soffit, fascia, and gutters on those buildings. We are waiting until the weather warms up to do the soffits and fascia. We have ordered and had delivered all the materials to complete the balance of the roofs.
- We are using the Architects engineering firm to give us a cost estimate for the drawing and specifications for replacing all the heating and domestic water piping in the crawlspaces. This is a major infrastructure project where we are starting to repair failures. Most of the piping is original to the buildings (circa 1963-64) and is beginning to fail. We have a contractor (SG Plumbing) that is doing all the life safety repairs on the system-keeping in mind we are planning a wholesale replacement of the system.
- The damaged pole has been replaced and reinstalled. A new camera was installed as well as new wiring.
- We had a meeting with the HUD Newark and Washington people. We are filing an emergency application this month as requested by their office. They have an amount of money that they can work with so we are hoping a good, complete application will win their favor.
- We are having a large tree removed near the senior building on March 21. It is a locust tree that has far outgrown the space and is now impacting the building. We will look into replacing the tree with something smaller in the spring.
- We are opening the wait list for 2,3,4-bedroom units only. We still maintain a long list for the smaller units, so it does not make sense to add to that.
- Covid safety is still our priority. The outside lobby is now closed to our residents, and we are back into lockdown, The Virus has run rampant throughout the community, fortunately with very few people needing hospitalization, but a lot of people getting sick. Testing has been a major problem, some places taking 5-7 days for results. The staff has all had the virus except Sherry. We are requiring both the positive and negative test results from each person, especially the negative test before they return to work.

Financial Update: February 2022

In review of the financial reports for the months of February 2022, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with negative results mainly stemming from the payments on our projects. This winter has been full of unexpected surprises. Between the water leak and the downed tree costs there were several unexpected costs. March will be negative also, given the roofing costs and the annual pension payment.

Income:

- Residential income has come in slightly over budget for the period. This is mainly due to conservative budgeting on the strong incomes by our tenants.
- Excess utility is under budget for the period.
- Interest income is below budget for the period.
- Other Operating receipts are over budget for the period. This is mainly due to the waste removal payments we have been receiving.
- Laundry income is slightly over budget for the period.
- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the period. We will keep an eye on this as the year progresses as it is running above budget. We have received and booked the March and April subsidy and have submitted our budgets to HUD. From the subsidy calculations in the budget, it appears we may be receiving a slightly lower subsidy this year. The estimate is slightly higher than our budget. Much of that is due to the strong incomes of our tenants and our continued high collection rate.

Expenses:

- Administrative salaries are under budget for the period. This trend will continue until the first 3 pay month (which is in July this year).
- Legal expense is over budget for the period. This is due to evictions and legal actions we are taking now that the State moratorium is off.
- Staff Training is under budget for the period.
- Travel is under budget for the month. We should not have any expenses until September when there is a conference in Washington, DC.
- Sundry Administrative is under budget for the period.
- Computer supplies is under budget for the period. Any upgrades will be done in the fall of this year.
- Telephone is under budget for the period.
- Dues and Memberships are under budget for the period.
- Electric is under budget for the period.
- Natural Gas is slightly over budget for the period. February was a very cold month.
- Maintenance salaries are under budget for the period.

- Maintenance materials is under budget for the period due to apartment renovations being done. We will have 6 apartments turn over in the next several months, so this category will be over budget.
- 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. The items here represent costs for plumbing repairs and replacement of the hot water storage tank in building 4

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

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

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director