

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, November 15th , 2023 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 Eva Teller, Commissioner Sean McDonnell, Commissioner Anne Studholme.

Also, Present:

Absent: Commissioner Terry Parliaros, Commissioner Jameelliah Lance, Jeet Gulati, Chelsea Graham, Assistant Director

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of October 18th. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Teller and seconded by Commissioner McDonnell. 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.

None Present

Borough Council Liaison Report:

- Mickey Eufemia discussed the conversations he had with Mayor Susan Bluth and Administrator Dimitri Musing regarding the cooperation agreement. The council is firmly entrenched in their thinking, but definitely want to settle the issue. The current thought is to separate the recycling from the waste removal in the agreement and lower the PILOT to 9%. Keith would prefer 8% as he considers it more equitable given our cost for recycling is almost 10K. The board is in agreement they want to settle the issue and return to a more normal relationship with the Borough. Mickey will continue to negotiate and see if we can get to 8%.

Committee Report:

- None

Resident Council Report:

- Mary Schilling discussed the Halloween bags that were given to the kids in the courtyard. Everything went very well, despite a couple of problems.
- Discussed the Christmas/Holiday bags that are being made. Chelsea is sending out a letter seeking donations of money or goods for the bags. All donations are requested by 12/10. Several other council members will distribute the bags.
- The bike racks were discussed again. There is still a problem at building 1 and Keith explained there are several kids in building 1 and not enough space for all the bikes. Plus, there are several kids that just drop their bike wherever they are when they are done riding. Chelsea will be working with the parents in that building to help the situation.

Resolutions:

- None

Discussion Items:

- None

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 99% Occupancy. We currently have a one bedroom unit that is being renovated. We are right-sized several units already this year, so we are going to bring in a new person.
- The infrastructure piping project has begun. The contractors have moved a storage and office trailer on site and are delivering a dumpster. They are beginning by completely cleaning out the crawlspaces to ease their work. I will keep everyone up to date on the progress of the project. I spoke with our HUD engineer in Washington about the project. He has signed off on everything and has sent it on for other signatures. He assured me of the full funding for all phases of the project, but we are waiting for the money to be available before we award the full contract. .
- The waiting lists remain closed. We are looking to open the list in January through the end of March to build up our lists.
- We made the choice to change the tenant management vendor to PHA -WEB. The first full month is complete, and everything went better than expected. We had one instance of a deposit being made in the wrong accounting period, which was corrected by a 5-minute call from the help support desk. Service with this company is excellent, we have unlimited help, and they always respond within 10 minutes. They walk you through the issue and show you how to resolve things.
- The annual Federal budget has been submitted to HUD. This mirrored the state budget, but placed in the federal system. Everything is now done on line, in the "Portal". It is actually an easier process, as the system will flag anything that may be in error, or they feel is in error.

- We had another major plumbing leak underground outside of building 2. We had to dig up the yard again to repair the leak. Hopefully the balance of funding will be available soon so that we can replace complete sections of pipe instead of just taking care of repairs.

Financial Update: October 2023

In review of the financial reports for the month of October 2023, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the month with negative results. This is the first month in the new system, so the reports are different, and I am still exploring and reviewing each to make sure they are the best (and most understandable).

Income:

- Residential income has come in over budget. This is due to the new tenants having strong incomes and past due balances are being collected. .
- Excess utility is slightly over budget for the period. A warmer than expected period in October kept the balance of A/C's in the windows.
- Interest income is over budget for the period. We are now getting current rates on our accounts.
- Other Operating receipts are slightly under budget for the period and over for the year. This is due to the insurance dividends that were received and various repairs that were made.
- Laundry income is slightly under budget for the period but slightly over for the year.
- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the period. Starting in April we saw the adjusted numbers and final numbers for the year. We should be receiving higher subsidy amounts continuing this year. Before any prorations we should be expecting about \$25.5 thousand each month in 2024. (If the Government can settle on a budget)

Expenses:

- Administrative salaries are under budget for the period. The difference will be made up in the 3 pay month of December.
- Legal expenses are slightly under budget for the period, but slightly over for the year.
- Travel is under budget for the period and the year.
- Telephones are under budget for the period. Having all the staff on one network is helpful and makes communications much easier. We are over budget for the year due to the fact one phone had to be purchased outright to finance the other 3.
- Sundry Administrative is over budget for the period. Pete reclassified some expenses during the transition period. The major item is the cost of the software and license for support. This was almost \$3750 dollars.

- Computer supplies are under budget for the period. We will be looking to upgrade at least 2 more computers this year when we install the new tenant management software.
- Dues and Memberships are over budget for the period. This is due to increasing the membership in certain organizations, plus annual IREM dues being paid.
- Misc. Maintenance supplies are under budget.
- Water and Sewer experienced a 17% increase this year that is unbudgeted. The next bill is October 1 and we will deal with the increase. The new rates are included in our 2024 budget. The current amount is for the replacement of the digital heads that needed to be replaced.
- Electric is over budget for the period, but within budget considering the excess utility. The expense is in the new system. (\$7856.71)
- Natural Gas is on budget for the period. We have had cooler than normal temperatures during this period.
- Maintenance salaries are under budget. December is 3 pay month.
- Maintenance materials are over budget for the period. As we are tuning over units, we are changing all the switches, outlets, base trim, and lighting. Fortunately, we have turned over 10 units this year. We have flooring and base trim inventoried for the units we are turning over, which comes mostly from the capitol budget.
- Electrical contract cost is over budget due to the replacement of 12 building light fixtures.
- Extermination Cost is over budget due to a bed-bug situation we are dealing with.
- Ground maintenance is on budget. This will come in slightly over budget for the year.
- Blue Cross/Blue shield. We experienced a 20% price hike on January 1. Fortunately, a larger increase was budgeted, but the expense is still larger than budgeted. We added a new employee that increased the costs, but they are budgeted in 2024.
- Collection Losses-includes all losses encountered during the year that are considered uncollectable.

Next meeting is scheduled for December 13th at 7:00

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

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director