

**MINUTES OF THE HIGHTSTOWN HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS
WEDNESDAY, December 21st, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Call to Order: Vice Chairperson Pascale Emmanuel called meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

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: by Keith LePrevost showed that those present and absent were as follows:

- **Present:** Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director, Commissioner Esther Velázquez, Commissioner Pascale Emmanuel, Vice Chair, Commissioner Christopher Moraitis, Commissioner Yolanda Swiney and Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh.
- **Also Present:** , Monique Dujue Wilson, Resident Council Liaison
- **Absent:** Commissioner Carole Nelson, and Commissioner James Eufemia.

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of: October 19th, 2016

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.

No members from the public were present.

Resolutions:

- **2016-7;** To Approve the 2017 Meeting Dates. Keith discussed the meeting dates and mentioned the December meeting has been moved up a week to avoid meeting so close to the holidays. Commissioner Swiney motioned to approve the meeting dates as presented. Commissioner Velázquez seconded the motion which was approved by the board.
- **2016-8;** To Approve the LS Engineering contract for design and construction services for the parking lot refurbishment project. Keith reviewed the bids from the 6 engineering firms and the range of pricing. He reviewed the scope of the project including the storm water management solutions that will be incorporated. Commissioner Moraitis motioned to approve the contract with LS Engineering which was seconded by Commissioner Emmanuel and approved by the board.
- **2016-9;** to approve the 2016-2017 audit contract with Hymanson, Parnes and Giampaolo for a fixed cost of \$7,335.00 per year. Keith explained the cost has risen from \$6,800. Per year. Keith feels this is reasonable given the scope of the work involved in the audit process. Commissioner Swiney motioned to approve the resolution which was seconded by Commissioner Velazquez and approved by the board.
- **2016-10;** to approve the 2017-2018 fee accounting contract with Peter Polcari at a fixed cost of \$2,380. Per month. Keith explained the fee has not increased in cost from the previous agreement. Keith was asked and explained the range and scope of the fee

- accountant's work. Commissioner Rivenburgh motioned to approve the fee accounting contract which was seconded by Commissioner Moraitis and approved by the board.
- **2016-11;** to approve the legal services contract with Turp, Coates, Driggers and White. Keith explained the cost of the legal contract has increased by \$50.00 dollars per month. The board questioned how much we spend on legal fees annually, and any projected additional costs. Commissioner Swiney motioned to approve the legal contract which was seconded by Commissioner Velazquez and approved by the board.
 - **2016-12;** To write off specific A/R balances as "uncollectable" Keith discussed the circumstances behind the balance and the reasons the amounts are uncollectable. Commissioner Moraitis motioned to approve writing off the balance of \$3,102.24 which was seconded by Commissioner Emmanuel and approved by the board.
 - **2016-13;** To approve the finalized State of NJ Budget submission. The State has reviewed our budget and has approved it as submitted. This process is to ratify and finalize the budget. Commissioner Velázquez motioned to approve the budget which was seconded by Commissioner Rivenburgh and approved by the board.

Discussion Items: HA Truck.

- Keith reviewed with the board the latest issue with the HA truck and the squirrels that made it their home. He explained the truck only travels about 300 miles per year, mostly because it is large, and inconvenient to drive on a regular basis. Keith uses his car for most HA errands just because it's easier to get around. Keith discussed trading the truck for a vehicle that will be more useful to the HA. He recommended a small van, like a Ford Transit Connect, or other make, but similar size. This way the vehicle can be parked in the garage at the office, out of the weather (and pests). It will still have the cargo and hauling capacity, but not be able to be used for snow plowing. The HA has contracted for its plowing services, as a liability concern. Keith will research and receive quotes from various dealers for the board's consideration.

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 98% occupancy. We have one new senior citizen moving in late December and the 3 BR handicap unit will be rented in January. The three bedroom unit needs extensive renovations.
- The RFP for engineers for the Boilers is out and we have 6 respondents. The first site meeting was on December 13th, with bids due the 4th of January. We will look to formalize an agreement at the February meeting.
- The RFP for Civil Engineers was successful. We are looking forward to getting to work redesigning our parking lots. I have asked the engineers to evaluate the crosswalk between the office and the senior side of the property. They have advised me it does not meet code and should be redone to avoid legal liability.
- We have hired a new employee. Bill Miller is a HA resident with a good work ethic and willingness to learn the trade.
- We have repainted all 26 of the boiler room and crawlspace doors.
- We continue to utilize our security cameras, almost on a daily basis.
- The borough has flushed the water lines on Rogers twice this month. The water is clearer.

- We have completed annual apartment and full property inspections for this year. We generated 131 work orders for the apartments and 7 for the property. Some typical examples are; caulking the tubs, replacing light bulbs, replacing GFI outlets and painting. We also replaced all of the smoke detector batteries on the property. Property work orders included cleaning all the outdoor light lenses on the porches and regarding the gravel parking lot.
- We took the truck in for servicing this month after 2 different engine lights went on. Diagnosis revealed a family of squirrels made the engine compartment home and chewed up several wires and hoses. Haldeman Ford is keeping the squirrels. We are working on clearing out a space in the Rogers Avenue garage for the truck.
- The spring bulbs have been planted this month.
- We will begin the process of replacing the radiator covers in the 2 buildings where lead was detected. We have ordered covers for one apartment that is being renovated, and once we have them installed, we will develop a time line to measure, order and replace approximately 100 radiator covers.
- One apartment that is being refurbished is taking longer than expected due to overall condition. We had to remove all the flooring- wood plank laminate was installed at some point, clean, level and install new underlayment and VCT. The lower kitchen cabinets were in bad shape, and were rebuilt in house. New counters, sink faucet and appliances have been installed. The bathroom has been redone with new tile in affected areas. All of the interior doors had to be replaced. The condition of this unit was a result of the family that occupied the unit, being particularly hard on all the finishes.

Financial Update: October, November 2016

In review of the financial reports for the month of October, 2016, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with positive results.

Income:

- Residential income has come in higher than our budget due to incomes of our residents, and the diligence of the staff to research and follow up when tenants either increase their work hours or find a new job.
- Laundry income is slightly over budget for the period.
- Subsidy income is slightly over budget due to the Federal 2016 budget.

Expenses:

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are on budget for the period and the year.
- Legal Expenses are under budget for the period but over budget for the year due to review of court filings for the Boroughs affordable housing plans and the Fair Housing suit initiated by one of our tenants.
- Staff training is under budget.

- Audit is under budget for the period, but on budget for the year.
- Dues and memberships are over budget due to renewal of membership in IREM.
- Water continues to be slightly over budget due to the Borough increase. We have made adjustments in the 2017 budgets.
- Electricity is slightly under budget, and under budget for the year.
- Natural Gas is under budget for the period and the year.
- Maintenance supplies are over budget due to full property inspections. We ordered and replaced 19 refrigerator gaskets (at about \$70 dollars each), fans, lights and other items that were worn, broken or in disrepair. This line item will be over budget in November and December due to apartment turnovers.
- Grounds maintenance is slightly over budget due to fall plantings.
- Misc. Contract costs are over budget due to generator work that was done.
- Extermination costs are on budget but over budget for the year due to bed bugs being treated in several apartments and the cost of termite treatment and inspections.
- Extraordinary maintenance is over budget for the period due to the tree removal, but under for the year.

Resident Council Update: The board recommended the Resident Council be added to the agenda of each meeting.

- Monique reported she has spoken with several residents this past month and the following are concerns or issues she would like to discuss.
 - Mr. Moody is pleased with his parking situation. The cone with his apartment number is satisfactory. He mentioned some kids have messed with the cone, but he is fine.
 - She has a complaint from a resident who feels we are being intrusive by requiring a copy of their driver's license for the parking permit. The policy is not clear and this may need to be addressed by clarifying the policy. Keith explained the requirement for a current driver's license, registration and insurance card was recommended by the Police department. Keith will reach out to our attorney and insurance company for their thoughts.
 - Monique spoke to another resident who has adopted a dog that the office says she cannot keep due to its size. Keith mentioned the policy is very clear on pets and he has spoken to this resident who took in the pet, without checking with the office or looking at the policy. Commissioner Rivenburgh questioned the breed and whether our insurance has an "aggressive animal" clause. Keith will research, but stated our policy of "under 25 pounds" was intentional to eliminate larger breeds such as Dobermans, German Shepherds and Pit Bulls that are intimidating.

- It was agreed that the policy's need to be updated and clarified when issues like this come up.

The board motioned to move into Executive Session at 8:40 to discuss 2 issues:

- Legal Matters: Fair Housing
- Staffing and Benefits Change

The board came back to open session at 9:03 PM

Announcements: The next meeting is scheduled for **January 4th, 2017** at **5:00 pm**.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by a motion **made at 9:03PM**.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director