

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH  
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 AT 5:00 P.M.**

Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to Order at 5:10PM

**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 Jeet Gulati.

**Also, Present: Mrs. Gulati**

**Absent: Commissioner Eva Teller, Commissioner Monique Wilson.**

**Approval of Minutes:** Regular Meeting Minutes of November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

- Commissioner Rivenburgh motioned to approve the minutes that was seconded by Commissioner Swiney. The motion was 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.

No Members of the public were in attendance.

**Borough Council Liaison Report:**

- Not present.

**Resident Council Report:**

- Not present
- **Nominations: To be done with Resolutions**
  - Commissioner Swiney nominated Commissioner Eufemia as the Chairperson. Commissioner Rivenburgh seconded the motion.
  - Commissioner Eufemia nominated Commissioner Swiney as Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Rivenburgh seconded the motion.

**Resolutions:**

- **2020-01 To Approve the following positions: The motion was carried with a roll call vote.**
  - Commissioner James Eufemia as Chairperson for 2020
  - Commissioner Swiney as Vice Chairperson for 2020
  - Allen Keith LePrevost as Secretary.

- **2020-02 To approve Allen Keith LePrevost as the 2020 PACO officer.**
  - This new position was created by the State to ensure the boards and commissions in the state stay above board. The board approved the resolution with a roll call vote.
- **2020-03 To approve the meeting dates for 2020.** The motion was approved with a roll call vote.
- **2020-04 To approve the “uncollected balances” for 2019.**
  - There was a general discussion amongst the board on the uncollected debt. Keith explained the process and members agreed it would be more expensive taking the process to court. The motion was approved by a roll call vote.

**Discussion Items:**

- Keith discussed the letter he received from Councilman Lee Stultz. The board understands the conflicts he has been having. Commissioner Rivenburgh informed the board that one of the partners wives died this past year of cancer, so the process has been more difficult.
- Bids on generators. Keith explained the bid process and how we are able to purchase all 3 generators in 2020 by May or June. The board is concerned with the disparity in cost, Keith will review and verify the contractor before any work begins. Commissioner Gulati wants to make sure we bid the project to include all 3 generators. Keith assured him the bid package was done to include multiple units.
- Boiler room Bids. The boiler room #7 has been bid, and the highest bidder is challenging the bid legally. We have sent the packages have been sent to our attorney for review and opinion. Unfortunately, this bidder is one the Engineer did not want to get the job. This could be a long and time-consuming process. We may need to eliminate all the bids and redo the process. Commissioner Swiney is concerned the High bidder will be back.
- State of Recycling. Keith discussed the current state of recycling. Our cost of recycling has gone from \$350 per month to around \$850 per month. Most of the cost increase is contamination, the whole load is going to the landfill. We have spoken to the mayor about trying other measures or cancelling the recycling program all together. Commissioner Swiney questioned what education we are doing. Keith explained how the program is working right now. Most commissioner dis not know how much of what is recycled is going into the landfill. Keith explained that Hightstown is not part of the MCI, so we are not part of the new recycling education that is being done. Keith wants to give education another shot, give it 6 months on intense education before we need to decide to cancel the program. The borough is currently being paid per ton for recycling, so at this point they want the weight. If we reduce the amount we recycle, it will affect the amount the Borough will receive. They want us to continue our program at all costs. The commissioners agree we need to continue the recycling program and encourage an education program focused on our residents.
- Dawes Park Funding. Keith discussed the donations we have made in the past, and recommendations going forward. Commissioner Swiney noted we have discussed giving scholarships or donations to each child. Keith suggested we create a form or sign up sheet in the office where we can give scholarships so they can go to camp. We can limit the funding to around \$250 per child. We can advertise door to door, and the Office staff know each and every family, so advertising will be easy. Keith will present forms and ideas at the next meeting for review.

### **Executive Director Report:**

- We are currently at 99% occupancy. The one unit we have is a 2-bedroom unit where a person in a handicap unit is being moved to this unit when complete so that we are able to move in a family with a son in a wheelchair.
- The final decision on RAD was communicated to the attorney and the Borough. We are waiting on the Borough to execute the Cooperation Agreement. It has not made it onto an agenda at this point.
- The generators have been bid. With the cost of \$16,500 per unit and a starting time of March to May, we may want to consider doing all 3 units. We have \$25K already set aside for the units and the new capital fund will be out by June of 2020. We can look at the cost and budget the balance in 2020. The contractor will be notified, and the project pushed back until all the funds are available. We were bidding the replacement of 3 of our 4 generators. The plan originally was to replace one unit per year.
- The boilers for building 7 have been put out to bid. We had 5 contractors pick up bid documents and 4 came to the pre-bid meeting. We received the bids this past Monday. We should be able to fund the balance of the cost out of our 2020 capital fund, with a small amount being required from cash flow. Once this boiler plant is done, we can begin budgeting for roofing.
- The tractor has been returned from servicing. We may want to consider in the 2020 year of replacing the tractor with a 4-wheel drive unit that has a hitch, dump body and a plow. The units will run in the \$15K range, but I feel will be much more useful on the site. We will need to get trade-in or for sale quotes on the tractor and put it out for public bids.
- All new laundry equipment has been installed. This is 2 years ahead of schedule, but we were starting to have problems. The new machines will take payment from the supplied card, a credit card or your phone. The card can be reloaded from our office, your phone or with a credit card. The card has its own app and can be checked any time. The residents are thrilled with the upgrade and the convenience of multiple payment methods.
- The large Blue Spruce was decorated and was lit daily the first week of December through the first week of January. Our tree is becoming quite a hit with prominent appearances on various social media sites. Donna and I spent over 4 hours installing the 5100 lights on the tree this year!

### **Financial Update: November-December 2019**

In review of the financial reports for the month of November and December 2019, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with positive results.

### **Income:**

- Residential income has come in over budget for the period and over budget for the year, mostly due to increased resident incomes and actively monitoring new hires and tenant work status. We have increased our budget expectation in this category for 2020, both in resident rent and subsidy, but we will still probably exceed that expectation.
- Excess Utility is now under budget for the period and slightly over budget for the year.
- Interest income is above budget for the period and the year. We are continuing to monitor interest rates and will renegotiate our savings rate as warranted.
- Other Operating receipts are slightly over budget for the period.
- Laundry income is over budget for the period and slightly over budget for the year.
- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the year. The two-year spending bill passed by congress has increased our subsidy for the year, but a final spending bill has been approved. Final spending funds were distributed recently with the correct prorations applied. Therefore, we show a larger variance this period.

#### Expenses:

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are both slightly under budget for the period.
- Legal expense is slightly under budget for period and under for the year.
- Staff Training is under budget for the period and the year.
- Telephone is slightly over budget. This cost appears to be stationary and will be adjusted in the 2020 budget.
- Computer supplies is over budget due to the purchase and installation of 2 new machines and software renewals.
- Sundry Administrative is over budget due to several factors. One is the Affordable Housing Accreditation cost which is \$1,000 per year.
- Water is under budget for the period, but we are expecting the bills in January.
- Electric is under budget for the period.
- Natural Gas is under budget for the period.
- Maintenance materials is slightly over budget for the period.
- Maintenance contract cost are well under budget.
- Plumbing Contract costs are over budget due to drain cleaning emergency.
- Electrical Contract costs are under budget for the period but over budget for the year due to generator repairs needed after the annual servicing.
- Grounds maintenance is over budget due to the exterior plantings and time of year.
- Pilot Expense is over budget due to budgeting issues. This will be corrected in the 2020 budget.

- Extraordinary maintenance. This amount is for the domestic hot water boiler in buildings 1 and 4 and the Capitol Needs assessment for the RAD application. We also paid out the fire escape cost instead of waiting for next year

**Next meeting is scheduled for February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 6:00**

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

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director