

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, July 15th, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.
Tele-Conference**

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 Brent Rivenburgh, Commissioner Eva Teller, Commissioner Jeet Gulati and Commissioner Monique Wilson, Resident

Also, Present: None

Absent: Borough Council Liaison

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of May 2020. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Rivenburgh and seconded by Commissioner Wilson. Minutes were modified by Jeet Gulati and 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.

No Members of the public were in attendance.

Borough Council Liaison Report:

- None

Resident Council Comments:

- Monique gave the report. The council is going to try and meet in August. She wants to know if the person arrested is coming back. Keith responded he was not aware of the charges, and as far as criminal activity, unless it is drug related or a violent crime, HUD is very lenient as far as eviction. Eva asked if the name could be used. Keith responded no. Brent asked if a tenant is clearly violent or a danger to another, can they be evicted? Keith responded yes, if you have a good paper trail. Monique stated she was unaware of the circumstances surrounding the arrest, but there was consensus amongst the residents.

Committee Report:

- None

Resolutions:

- None

Discussion Items:

- The board discussed the boiler project. Keith explained the boiler being installed in building #7 is the same as the other 2 completed rooms. The boilers are a bit smaller, but identical. The contractor is very pleasant, ordered everything well in advance and the project is moving very quickly. The BTU reduction is in direct relation to the heat that is needed. There are only 22 units, so smaller units were ordered. The big difference is the installation of a mechanical draft fan on the chimney. This fan creates a positive vent for each of the boilers.
- Mickey complimented the staff on the new kitchens. The Community room kitchen really looks nice and it came out very nice. Keith commented we are currently working on a handicap unit, and the new resident is thrilled.
- Social Distance Policy. Keith discussed the policy in place. The staff is doing very well with the policy, it is the kids that are the real problem. Monique feels the parents of the kids are a problem also. Monique discussed returning to school and the challenges we all will face. Keith read the EW plan and does not understand how they are going to accomplish this, and who is going to afford it. Mickey commented most older kids have already received computers. Keith commented the plan does not address safety of the staff, just reopening the building. Monique commented that she was on a call where most parents are concerned about sending the kids back. Brent commented that his parent are in South Carolina, they have commented how few people wear masks, social distance or follow the established protocols. Mickey commented his buildings in NY are a ghost town. They do not expect tenants back until after Labor Day if they decide to come back. Keith and Brent commented of several events that have been cancelled through the first of the year. Keith discussed the State's current eviction policy. Unfortunately, you must give each person 6 months to pay for each month they are behind. Mickey feels we all need to remain hopeful.
- Micky brought us the summer camp. Keith apologized; the board packet has been done for a couple weeks. All summer camps have been cancelled this year. They tried to open the camps, and quickly decided to keep them closed.

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 97% occupancy. We have interviewed and have a handicapped tenant moved into this unit at the end of April. This is also our test unit for the new kitchens. The space has been redone with new flooring, all electrical work and painting. The cabinets are installed and a new tile backsplash. We are taking the extended timeframe into consideration for the new units. Another one bedroom has become available. The tenant died and we will get the unit back by the end of the month.

- New signs have been placed by the recycling dumpsters with new recycling instructions going out to tenants every week. Contamination has not improved. I look at the recycling container several times per week.
- The new cabinets look great. The maintenance men installed the new cabinets, counters, flooring, and appliances. All the handicap units will be done this year. The first unit is done, and we are moving into the community room kitchen as we speak. We have a one bedroom that has been vacated that will be done when things open up.
- The office kitchen has been delivered. We have completed the kitchen after an extensive remodel. As expected, we needed to run 4 new circuits into the kitchen, repair the walls and floor, install a new closet and of course all new cabinets. The problem is getting countertops and ordering the new kitchen. Everything is still shut down due to the governor. I am hopeful things loosen up in the coming weeks so we can continue working. The guys have done a beautiful job with the kitchen that has been completed.
- The generators have been bid and 3 new units installed. We are adding a new feature that will allow the maintenance company and us the ability to remotely monitor and diagnose each unit. This will insure quick and accurate service each time they come out. The new units look great and will offer service for many years to come.
- The boilers for building 7 have been put out to bid for the second time. We have selected the low bidder on the project and the work is scheduled to begin on June 1. The initial payment has been made on the performance bond and the garage has been cleaned out for material storage. Work will begin when the existing boilers are shut down.
- We have communicated with the attorney regarding the PILOT payment. At this time, we have not heard anything from the Borough.
- All our legal affairs will be turned over to Leland Hutchinson in the coming months. We have worked with Leland in the past with great success. Leonard is retiring after a long career and we wish him well. Leland is fully up to date with all our affairs and the transition will be effortless.
- The novel Coronavirus is on everyone's mind. We discuss it as a staff and are taking a more traditional approach, wash your hands often, keep your hands away from your face, stay out of crowds and avoid being around anyone who appears sick. As a service industry, we are unable to avoid being at work. We are all working split shifts, morning and afternoon so that we are here for the residents and able to handle. Starting on May 1 we are beginning to open daily from 9-3 each day. We are maintaining the social distancing and remaining vigilant until told otherwise by the Governor.

- We have made significant efforts but are unable to keep our residents apart, especially the children. Parents have been called, notices printed and delivered door to door, but people will do what they choose to do. Several parents have told us to “mind our own business” and to “leave the parenting to them”. Many parents are tired of being cooped up with the kids, between home schooling and lack of social activities so an hour or so of quiet time with the kids outside is a welcome respite.

Financial Update: April 2020

In review of the financial reports for the month of April 2020, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with negative results. Decreases in cash come from payments made on March 31 for Water and Sewer expense and April 1st-Employer pension payments were due. This accounted for more than \$50 thousand dollars.

Income:

- Residential income has come in slightly under 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.
- Excess Utility is under budget for the period and slightly under budget for the year.
- Interest income is slightly below budget for the period and the year. Interest does not get posted to the account until after the 15th of the following month. 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 current payment is for part of March and the balance is for April. May and June will be short of our budgeted amount which will bring this account into line.

Expenses:

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are both on budget for the period.
- Legal expense is slightly under budget for period and for the year.
- Staff Training is under budget for the period and the year.
- Travel is under budget for the period and the year.
- Sundry Administrative is under budget due to several factors.
- Dues and Memberships are over budget due to renewals of memberships to National trade organizations.
- Water is slightly over budget for the period.
- Electric is under budget for the period.
- Natural Gas is under budget for the period.

- Maintenance materials is slightly under 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 slightly over budget for the period but over budget for the year due to generator additions needed after the new installation and contract for annual servicing.
- Grounds maintenance is slightly under budget for the year.

Next meeting is scheduled for September 15th, 2020 at 7:00

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

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director