

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, April 21st, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.
Meeting Via Zoom**

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 Yolanda Swiney, Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh, Commissioner Eva Teller, Commissioner Jeet Gulati.

Also, Present:

Absent: Borough Council Liaison

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of March 18th, 2021. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Swiney 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.

No Members of the public were in attendance.

Borough Council Liaison Report:

- None

Committee Report:

- Policy- Employee Manuel.
 - Commissioner Eufemia reviewed the policy and asked Commissioner Swiney to discuss her comments. Commissioner Swiney thinks the policy as written for part-time personnel is restrictive. Perhaps change so that

vacation time is available right away. Commissioner Rivenburgh feels it may make it more difficult to hire a part time person. He feels the delay needs to be justified. Commissioner Teller explained at the Bank part timers receive benefits immediately after hire. Commissioner Gulati agrees that time should be allotted right away. Keith discussed the previous policy and the board changed when the State of NJ changed the sick leave policy. Previously P/T personnel did not have any benefits. Keith suggested we consider a change to 5 days upon hire and moving to 10 days after 5 years. This is in line with our F/T policy. Keith will make changes to the policy.

Resident Council Report:

- None

Resolutions:

- None

Discussion Items:

- Keith discussed the attached spending plan. We have received \$198,400 in capital money for 2021 and he suggests spending an additional \$150,000 out of our cash on hand. This will allow us to accomplish much of what we have been considering and make a serious attempt at spending down our cash reserves. We have been fortunate to be in the position of bringing in more money than needed for the last several years. We have made attempts to spend down our reserves but tend to earn more than we spend. As to the attached roofing budget, to reroof, new soffits, Facia and gutters we will be spending approximately \$550,000. This project will be broken up over a few years depending on our funding and on the final pricing from the contractors. Commissioner Eufemia questioned the lifespan of the shingle and the color selection. He also questioned whether the Architects considered other types of roofing. Keith explained we are looking at 40-year shingles. The color will be selected by the board when we get to the bidding phase and have selected a contractor. The Architect feels shingles are the best match to go along with the Solar installation, as the mounting brackets can be woven into the shingle installation. The panels will sit approximately 4” off the roof to allow for air flow. The way the budget is currently presented, we are looking at spending approximately \$150K on roofing and approximately \$75K on Solar this year. We are planning on meeting with the solar consultants early in May so we will have a better handle on the costs. Commissioner Eufemia asked the board for their input. Keith assured all the Commissioners we will be bringing all estimates forward in the coming weeks as well as color choices and any changes in the budget.

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 98% occupancy. We have completely redone a 3-bedroom handicap unit and will be leasing that unit as soon as a suitable family is located.

It is a handicap unit, so we are making sure the wheelchair features are needed in the unit. If a suitable family is not located, the next 3-bedroom family will be contacted. We have completely redone a one-bedroom senior unit that will be occupied May 1.

- The gardens have all been rototilled and fresh compost has been added. We are planning on piping the gutters on the end of building one to a new rain garden that will be located behind the resident gardens. This will be filled with new perineal plants and 3 trees to add color and texture to the area as well as reducing the lawn area.
- Roto Rooter was in and jetted the lines for building 3 and 4. I think this proactive approach makes sense, preventing major clogs in the future.
- We have the maintenance people identifying where our sewer lines exit the buildings to consider installing cleanout on the exterior of the building. This will help in the buildings where there is only a crawl space and is very difficult to access.
- The architect has been in we reviewed the plans and estimates they have provided. By using the Drone and reviewing each building they have come up with a comprehensive plan for our roofs. We have estimated costs, and we can review them at the meeting to determine how much of the roofing we will accomplish each year. The next steps are to finish the plans and notes, final review and then we can begin the bidding process.
- CFP 2021 has been released. We have almost 200K in capital funding and I have spoken to Pete about spending up to 150k out of cash to supplement the fund. This will provide us with a wide range of projects this year. Plus, this doubles our roofing budget, pays for soft costs (Architect/engineer) and covers expenses we will incur but not normally budget including tree removal, flooring costs, sidewalk repair in your packet is a proposed spending plan to review.
- We have ordered and will install a new DVR for the camera system. The new system will handle 36-12 MPS cameras where our existing handles all the cameras, but only at about 2MPS.
- We held another COVID vaccine clinic here in the conference room. The West Windsor Health department administered the shots. Unfortunately, there is a Federal hold on the single shot that was being administered, so most residents opted to wait for the hold to be lifted. We still had a full day, with 2 nurses giving injections, they were here from about 12:30 to 4:00. Sherry did a great job organizing the residents and monitoring the flow of people during the afternoon.
- We have a squirrel problem in the attic of building 2. The camera people found a lot of chewed up wires, including electrical wires. An electrician has been called in to repair/replace any damaged wires. Also, the tree people were called in to cut back any tree that is in the area where a squirrel could get to the building. The

current Cryptomeria cannot be cut back and trimmed. They will be removed and replaced with a Holly or other slow growing plant. Rodent bait has been ordered that will take care of any animal that is in residence.

- We have discovered a leak in a hot water return line. Unfortunately, it is between building 6 and 7 in a PVC conduit. We will have to call a plumbing contractor to determine the next steps before we proceed. We are starting by installing new shut off valves on both ends of the return line and cutting back the PVC to determine if the leak is near the end of the line. The worst-case scenario has come true. We will need to begin digging up the line to find the leak. Commissioner Eufemia asked whether there is room to run a new PEX line in the PVC. Keith explained the ends were foamed solid and we need to open things up and determine how far the solid foam goes. Running a new PEX line is the ideal scenario. We will keep you up to date with our progress.
- Covid safety is our priority. Now is the time we are all re-doubling our efforts to stay safe. New guidance from the State has us checking temperatures of everyone entering the building. As a service industry, we are unable to avoid being at work. We are maintaining the social distancing and remaining vigilant until told otherwise by the Governor.

Financial Update: March 2021

In review of the financial reports for the month of March 2021, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the month with negative results. The month was complicated by payments to the Borough for water and sewer and to the State for Annual pension contributions.

Income:

- Residential income has come in over budget for the period and over budget for the year. This is mainly due to conservative budgeting.
- Interest income is below budget for the period. This is mainly due to the low interest rate environment.
- Other Operating receipts are slightly over budget for the period. This is partly due to the waste removal payments we have been receiving.
- CFP for operating has been received, just posted by journal entry separately.
- Laundry income is under budget for the period, but slightly over for the year.
- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the period. We will keep an eye on this as the year progresses. We have received the March/April subsidy which is well above our estimates. I will update you as the year progresses and the Government finalizes the 2021 budgets and subsidies.

Expenses:

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are both under budget for the period. We had a 3 pay month that happened in January that still has us over budget, but we are coming back into line in this month.
- Legal expense is under budget for the period but over budgeted for the year due to PILOT payment discussions and eviction letters. (2)
- Staff Training is slightly under budget for the period and the year.
- Sundry Administrative is under budget for the period, but due to software renewals earlier this year, we are still over budget.
- Travel is well under budget for the period due to the virus.
- Dues and Memberships are over budget for the period and the year due to license and association renewals.
- Water is on budget for the year.
- Electric is under budget for the period. They have been doing estimates for 10 of the last 12 periods, so we ended up with a credit.
- Natural Gas is slightly over budget for the period and over for the year. We had a very cold winter, and hopefully the numbers will come back into line this spring.
- Maintenance materials is over budget for the period and over budget for the year due to apartment renovations being done. Money is spent at HD Facilities and Home Depot for materials including new flooring for the units.
- Ground's maintenance is over budget due to the cost of snow removal this year.
- Maintenance contract cost are on budget for the period, but under budget for the year.
- Pension expense came in slightly lower than budget.
- Extraordinary maintenance is used for all costs that are outside the CFP funding and will be capitalized at the end of the year. The expense shown is for the kitchen cabinet costs that were above what is available in CFP 2020. The cost will be recaptured in the 2021 CFP.

Commissioner Eufemia brought up the possibility of inviting Terry Parliaros to join our board. Several members voiced positive comments regarding Terry. Keith feels he would make a great addition to the Board. Commissioner Eufemia will talk to Terry and invite him to the next meeting.

Next meeting is scheduled for May 19th, 2021 at 7:00

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

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director