

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, October 20th, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.**

Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to Order at 7:05PM

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 Terry Parliaros.

Also, Present:

Absent: Commissioner Jeet Gulati, Mayor Larry Quattrone.

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of September 15th, 2021. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Rivenburgh 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. The board discussed the status of the PILOT agreement with the Borough. Eva and Jeet have been working on it and Eva has spoken to the Mayor who said he would bring it up to the Council. The Borough Attorney and CFO have received the plan and will hopefully comment. Keith explained this is the second year we have been discussing this with them. We are still putting part of the PILOT money in trust with the attorney. A letter specifically addressing the two payments has been sent to the Borough and to the Attorney.

Borough Council Liaison Report:

- None

Committee Report:

- Procurement Policy. The Board reviewed the attached policy and discussed. Keith explained the policy has remained virtually unchanged with only minor grammatical and wording changes to meet the State guidelines. The policy was approved by the board by voice vote.

Resident Council Report:

- None

Resolutions:

- 2021-8 To accept and submit the 2022 budget as written to the State of NJ. The Board reviewed and discussed the 2022 budget. Commissioner Eufemia applauded Pete Polcari our Accountant and Keith for the fine work they are doing and keeping the HA looking and running well. Keith discussed how he received the OCAF numbers for 2022 and SS will be receiving a 5.9% increase. He questioned whether giving the staff 3% is adequate given they are the ones really dealing with inflation. The Board had a lengthy discussion on the topic both for and against the increase. Keith has run the numbers and the 5.9% increase will cost the HA an additional \$3500 dollars per year. One concern is this raises the employees base pay, which affects future years. It was decided to give the employees a 4% increase in 2022 and give up to a \$500 gift card to the employees at Christmas time. The Board accepted the Budget with the discussed changes by a roll call vote.
- 2021-9 To Accept the 2020 Audit as prepared by Hymanson, Parnes and Giampaolo. The Audit was reviewed by the board and Commissioner Eufemia commented that its impressive we have zero findings! Keith commented that Pete is very conscious in his review each month and makes sure we are fully prepared for the Audit each year. Pete prepares a set of “work papers” for the auditors that are sent to them ahead of time which makes the process much easier. The Board accepted the Audit as presented by a roll call vote.

Discussion Items:

- Roofing, Soffit and Facia Colors. Keith showed the Board all the color samples that were provided by the contractor. They were reviewed by the board and agreed that sticking with a color very similar to what we have is in our best interest. It was discussed going with a dark color, black and changing the doors and windows to the at also. It would provide a nice contrast, but with having to do projects over the course of several years, and with the funding sources being somewhat unreliable, its best to stick with what we have. The board approved the color choices: All of these will blend in well with the brick.

Bark wood for the shingles

Aged Bronze for the Soffit and Facia

Bronze for the Gutter

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 100% occupancy. We will be receiving a 3-bedroom unit from a woman that is buying a townhome. She has been with us for years, going to school and now she has a great job and making very good money. Her children are grown and one is away at school and the other has begun working. The unit will be completely redone for a new tenant.

- All work orders from the annual inspections are done. The guys have been working on replacing fencing that has deteriorated over the years.
- The heating system is now on for the season. We close the valves to the buildings in the summertime to avoid the migration of hot water in the system.
- We have an emergent situation we are taking care of. We had a major crack and failure of one of the concrete beams that support a stairwell. Fortunately, it has not affected the structure. We have called in an engineer who has devised a plan to repair the damaged areas. A temporary support structure has been erected and caution tape was installed to keep people away. We have a mason contractor that is going to repair the damage.
- The roofs and stairs will be started shortly. We have color samples for the roofing, gutters, soffit, and fascia. The stair contractor is going to be working in areas not affected by the roofing to not conflict during the process. This year we will be reroofing buildings 3,4 and 5. Next year's capital will be focused on completing the other buildings.
- The Auditors have been in and completed their annual audit. We are fortunate to come through with 0 finding and recommendations! The completed audit gives us the final number to pay for our PILOT agreement. Once again, I would like to draft 2 checks for the PILOT. One will be sent to the Borough, and the second which will equal the cost of the recycling we will deposit in the Attorney escrow account. Without a signed agreement from the Borough, I think this is the safest way to handle the situation.
- We have several plants that have not done well in newly landscaped areas. Although well-watered, the heat and time of year they were planted has not been ideal. The landscaper has agreed to remove and reinstall new plants in the fall.
- The Annual boiler servicing has been scheduled for October. All 6 boilers will be cleaned and serviced.
- All the trees in the Courtyard will be cut back this fall. This keeps the trees away from the buildings and keeps their height down below the roof line. They look bad at first, but quickly grow back in the springtime.
- Covid safety is still our priority. The outside lobby have been reopened to our residents and it feels good to be getting back to "normal" We have been discussing and are concerned with the increase in cases being reported. We are actively watching the variants that are out there and we are prepared to reinstate protective measures as needed.
- We received the unfortunate news that our long-time commissioner Yolanda Swiney has sold her home and will be moving out of the area. October will be her last meeting. Thank you for her service to us in the past and we are wishing her the best of luck in the future.

Financial Update: September 2021

In review of the financial reports for the months of September 2021, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with positive results. The spending in the "Extraordinary Maintenance" category are for the new rain garden on the end of building 1 and architect fees for the roofing and stairs.

Income:

- Residential income has come in well over budget for the period and over budget for the year. This is mainly due to conservative budgeting and strong incomes by our tenants.
- Excess utility is over budget for the period and the year.
- Interest income is below budget for the period. This is mainly due to the low interest rate environment.
- Other Operating receipts are over budget for the period. This is mainly due to the waste removal payments we have been receiving and for money left from repairs needed after a move out.
- Laundry income is Over budget for the period, and slightly under for the year.
- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the period. We will keep an eye on this as the year progresses as it is running well above budget. We have received the September-October subsidy and it continues to run well above budget. The Government finalized the 2021 budgets and subsidies. We have not been given any indication as to prorations for 2021, but the overall amounts have been approved. We may have some cuts in the November-December budget period. I will keep you up to date as the year progresses.

Expenses:

- Administrative salaries are under budget for the period and the year.
- Legal expense is slightly under budget for the period and slightly under budget for the year.
- Staff Training is slightly over budget for the period and slightly under for the year. This will come in line with the new Board Member when he begins taking classes.
- Travel is under budget for the month, but well under for the year. Due to the pandemic, most conferences have been cancelled this year.
- Sundry Administrative is under budget for the period, and slightly under for the year.
- Telephone is under budget for the period and the year.
- Dues and Memberships are under budget for the period but over for the year due to license and association renewals.
- Water is on budget for the year.
- Electric is over budget for the period. The residents have been using their air-conditioning (which is excess utility). Combining our budget with the excess utility line item brings us right in line.
- Natural Gas is under budget for the period and under for the year. We had a very cold spring, and we have done well, running at the low end of our expectations.
- Maintenance salaries are under budget for the period, but over budget for the year due to overtime costs.
- 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, switches, outlets, cover plates and smoke detectors. for the units.
- Electrical contract costs are under budget for the period and the year.

- Ground's maintenance is under budget due to keeping the Sun-patiens this year instead of replanting with all mums.
- Extraordinary maintenance is used for all costs that are outside the CFP funding and will be capitalized at the end of the year. Some of these costs are planned and approved items including the Architectural fees.

2 Checks were made out on October 1st, \$30,799.63 to Borough of Hightstown, \$6,237.37 to Attorney Trust Account. This is for the annual PILOT payment

Next meeting is scheduled for November 17th at 7:00

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

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director