

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON Tuesday, May 17th, 2022 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 Jeet Gulati, Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh, Commissioner Eva Teller, Commissioner Jameeliah Lance.

Also, Present: Mary Schilling, Evelyn Brooks, James Haywood, Bill Miller.

Absent: Mayor Larry Quattrone, Commissioner Sean McDonnell, Commissioner Terry Parliaros

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of April 20th. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Teller and seconded by Commissioner Gulati. Minutes were unanimously approved with adjustment to date of last meeting.

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.

James Haywood spoke regarding the family's elderly father that lives in the unit. He feels they should be given an exemption to the smoking rule for the father. He explained the father wakes up in the morning and lights a cigarette without thinking. Keith explained the rules were set by HUD and we can no change that. If they feel they should have an exemption, they need to go to HUD in Washington and ask for an exemption. Keith suggested contacting Senator Cory Booker for assistance. Keith reminded both James and Evelyn that they signed the "No Smoking Waiver" when they moved in, and the restriction will be enforced. Several of the Board members support the banning of lighted products and would not support an exemption.

Mary Schilling spoke about the trash situation in the courtyard. She explained the kids are leaving trash in the courtyard every day. Bill Miller (also an employee of the HHA) explained he has to pick up the trash every morning, including on the weekends. Keith said they recognize the problem and have been dealing with this for years. He would like the resident council to address the situation with the parents. He does not want it to appear to be another "edict" coming down from the management. (Update: Sherry has contacted several people that are registered to perform community service, and all are more than willing to help keep the site

clean in exchange for their community service obligation. We will monitor to see how this is working.)

Resident Council Report:

- Jameeliah Lance reported that several residents complained about the “1 chair” rule on the patios. Keith explained that this is a HUD rule that is enforced by REAC. The HHA has been cited in the past for multiple items on the porches, lowering our scores. Due to COVID we have not been inspected in the last 2-3 years so Keith is expecting an inspection this year. The walk-around that was done is preparation for a possible inspection later this year. A question was raised about having a plant stand with flowers on the porch. Keith explained the difficulty trying to fairly apply a policy for a planter, as the sizes, configurations and shapes vary so widely.

Borough Council Liaison Report:

- None- It was noted we have been meeting for more than 2 years without a Liaison from the Borough.

Committee Report:

- **ED Contract:**
 - The Policy committee met and discussed the ED contract. They have specific recommendations they will forward to the entire board for review and approval at the June meeting.

Resolutions:

- 2022-4 To accept the 2022 Capitol fund
 - Keith discussed the awarded Capitol fund the proposed spending plan. There are several new items on the list, including removal of asphalt paving that was in areas where we used to have clotheslines and sidewalks in the courtyard that appear to go nowhere. Both will provide larger grass areas that are good for both the kids and the environment. We have also included money for the final payment on the roofing project and replacing major piping in the crawlspaces. The resolution was forwarded by Commissioner Rivenburgh and seconded by Commissioner Teller. The board unanimously approved the resolution.

Discussion Items:

- **PILOT Agreement:** Keith discussed the state of the current PILOT agreement. Both Commissioner Teller and Commissioner Gulati affirmed there has been no progress or discussions with the mayor. It was mentioned that there is a possibility that the next Mayor will find time for the HHA, and we can settle the issue. For now, we will continue with the status quo.
- **Roofing Project:** Keith noted the roofing project has been finished. The Borough has issued a Certificate of completion, and the architect has done a final walkthrough and punch list. We found on piece of gutter guard after a windstorm and reported it to the contractor. They said they would

come right out and inspect and replace whatever is damaged. Keith is very impressed with the company and is please with their responsiveness.

- **Grant Application:** Keith had a conversation this past week with both HUD Newark and HUD Washington regarding the status of the Grant. He noted the concern is allocating that much money to the HHA all at one time. He suggested a timeline for allocating the money that was much more palatable to the HUD reps. Keith expects a decision won't be finalized until late June or July.

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 99% Occupancy. We have completed a 2-bedroom unit and a one-bedroom unit for a tenant. Currently we are renovating a 4-bedroom unit. We have outside people that have been notified and are waiting for the unit.
- The plumbers are taking a hiatus while we finish the roofing and will resume work later this year. .
- We had a major water issue that damaged one of our new boilers in building 1. All the damage has been repaired and the boiler is back online.
- All the roofing has been completed. Soffits and facias are done on all buildings. We have received the final C.O from the Municipality and are waiting for the final paperwork from the contractor and Architect. We had all the heavy galvanized gutter protectors covering all the downspouts removed prior to the start of the project.
- We submitted a comprehensive package of materials to HUD for review and possible funding. The engineers were in and reviewed all the crawlspaces and have put together a comprehensive cost estimate for the project. At this point we are asking for approximately \$1.4 million dollars. I have been encouraged by calls from Washington looking at the project and by the speed it is being reviewed. We had a follow up meeting on 5/11 to discuss the project with the HUD representatives. We do not have any word at this point.
- The garbage can in the center court was removed. The can was mostly used by residents throwing their household garbage in the can. We are working on trying to get the kids to stop littering, but
- The large tree by building 7 has been removed. We will investigate replacing the tree later this year with a smaller variety.
- The wait list for 2,3,4-bedroom units is now open until June 30th. We still maintain a long list for the smaller units, so it does not make sense to add to that.
- We had a piece of glass replaced in the front entry way. It was broken in two places from what looks like a rock. We reviewed the tapes and did not find any evidence. We had the glass
- Covid safety is still our priority. The outside lobby is now open to our residents, and currently holding outside meetings. We are watching the new variant that is

spreading quickly. Adjustments will be made as we watch things progress. We are still not allowing outside people into the offices. The staff has all had the virus except Sherry. We are requiring both the positive and negative test results from each person, especially the negative test before they return to work.

Financial Update: April 2022

In review of the financial reports for the months of April 2022, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the month with negative results mainly stemming from the payments on our projects. This winter has been full of anticipated costs. April was negative, given the roofing costs and the annual pension payment. In May we will be making the final payment on the roofing and the annual insurance bills. We are anticipating the release of CFP 2022 to help offset the cost of the roofing.

Income:

- Residential income has come in slightly under budget for the period. This is mainly due to the new tenant incomes are much lower than previous tenants. Two of our tenants that died recently had extremely high incomes and paid market rents. HUD subsidies will recover eventually, Subsidies are based on 3 year average of resident incomes.
- Excess utility is under budget for the period.(wintertime)
- Interest income is below budget for the period. We will keep an eye on rates and ask for increases as soon as available.
- Other Operating receipts are over budget for the period. This is mainly due to the receipt of insurance money from the boiler room that was damaged.
- Laundry income is slightly over budget for the period.
- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the period. We will keep an eye on this as the year progresses as it is running above budget. We have received and booked the May and June subsidy. The amount received is exactly on budget for the 1st half of the year. From the subsidy calculations in the budget, it appears we may be receiving a slightly lower subsidy this year, which is based on our resident rents.

Expenses:

- Administrative salaries are under budget for the period. This trend will continue until the first 3 pay month (which is in July this year).
- Legal expense is over budget for the period. This is due to evictions and legal actions we are taking now that the State moratorium is off.
- Staff Training is under budget for the period. Now that we have 2 new commissioners, that number will quickly come into line.
- Travel is under budget for the month. We should not have any expenses until September when there is a conference in Washington, DC.

- Sundry Administrative is slightly under budget for the period.
- Computer supplies is under budget for the period. Any upgrades will be done in the fall of this year.
- Telephone is over budget due to the renewal of the maintenance agreement for the copier.
- Dues and Memberships are under budget for the period.
- Water is on budget for the year.
- Electric is over budget for the period. They have been doing estimates and have adjusted. Over the last several months, this category is still below budget.
- Natural Gas is slightly under budget for the period. The weather is moderating, and so are the bills.
- Maintenance salaries are under budget for the period.
- Maintenance materials is slightly over budget for the period.
- Grounds maintenance continues to be over budget. The main cost last month was from the repair of the lawn after the water leak outside building 2.
- 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. The items here represent costs for the engineering fees associated with the crawlspaces and security camera repairs and replacements that were done post roofing.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 15th, 2022 at 7:00

The meeting was adjourned by a motion made by Commissioner Gulati and seconded by Commissioner Teller.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director