

**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 17th, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M.**

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 Eva Teller, Commissioner Sean McDonnell, Commissioner Terry Parliaros.

Also, Present: Assistant Director Chelsea Graham, Jeet Gulati, Council Liaison

Absent: Commissioner Anne Studholme, Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh, Commissioner Jameallah Lance

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of February 21st. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Eufemia. 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.

Borough Council Liaison Report:

- **Nothing to report.**

Committee Report:

- None

Resident Council Report:

- Chelsea Graham gave an update on the Resident Council meeting. Successful Easter egg hunt sponsored by local church. Well attended, about 40 people. Planning is underway for Mothers day. New signs were ordered and received for each building to assist with Amazon and other deliveries.

Resolutions:

- **None**

Discussion Items:

- **Piping Project:** Keith discussed the current project and where we are at the moment. He explained building 3 and 5 are substantially piped and the contractor is at the point where we are ready to shut down the heating system on May 15th so he can begin making those connections. Also as the temperatures warm he will be able to do the underground work, as it involves pouring new concrete for sidewalks. We are moving well ahead of the schedule. We fortunately have received the approval to move forward with the next phase.
- **Grant:** A second phase of the grant has been received for \$709K. This will take care of the full second phase and Keith has already applied for the funding for the 3rd and final phase.
- **Asbestos:** We have run into a minor snag in the piping project. We have found some Asbestos pipe wrap on some hot water pipes. This area is under building 1 and the office. Engineers have been contacted and prices to remove and remediate the area.

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 100 % Occupancy. Chelsea filled the 2 units that were vacant in February. We recently renovated a 2-bedroom unit for a new tenant. This unit was previously fully renovated so all it needed was paint, wax, and cleaning. The new tenant moved in March 1. We also fully renovated a studio unit that needed everything. It is rented for March 1. On April 10 we had a tenant die, we will receive the unit on May 1. It will need a complete renovation.
- The infrastructure piping project is well underway. The contractors have installed hundreds of feet of pipe in the crawlspaces of building 3,4 and 5. The water has been tested and approved so the final connections were made. The contractors will now remove all the old hot and cold-water piping from the crawlspace. When we are able to turn the heat off (May 15th) we will drain the entire system and the contractor will make all the connections in the 3 buildings so that our heating system is complete. Then all the old heating supply and return piping will be removed. We have the approval to begin working on buildings 1 and 2, so the contractors will begin drilling holes and installing pipe hangers.
- One problem we have encountered is asbestos pipe insulation in building 1 and the office crawlspace. We are working with various professionals and contractors to remove the hazard and clean the entire area so that it is safe and ready for the contractor. The cost of this is unknown at this point, but we will keep you up to date.
- I reached out to HUD Newark to get their guidance on this issue. One problem is that our project manager at HUD has retired, and a replacement has not been named. I sent a note to the construction manager at HUD.

- The waiting lists are closed. I have been a little underwhelmed by the response, only getting 48 applications to date. The list closed on March 31 and at this point I feel we have an adequate number of people on the list.
- We have not had time to begin making the changes to the ACOP(Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy). We will begin working on these changes in the coming months. Changes will need to be adopted by the end of 2024. Copies will be sent to the committee to review and comment before new policies are adopted. Changes are needed to comply with the HOTMA changes that are being implemented by HUD. This will affect entrance and occupancy requirements as well as annual certifications.
- The federal budget has been approved and we have received our subsidy through May of this year so far. Also, 2024 Capital funding has been approved and will be accessible in the next couple of months. We have reviewed and certified our occupancy for the 2025 grants already.
- We received another grant of \$709,446. To help with the piping project. This will cover all the cost of buildings 1 and 2. To date we have received over 1.2 million dollars for the project, and we are applying this month for another \$400,000.

Financial Update: February/March 2024

In review of the financial reports for the month of February/March 2024, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the month with positive results. I have included a variety of reports for your review.

Income:

- Residential income has come in slightly over budget. Even with the budgeted increase we are still exceeding the amount.
- Excess utility is slightly under budget for the period.
- Interest income is slightly over budget for the period. We are now getting current rates on our accounts.
- Other Operating receipts are under budget for the period. This comes in line later in the year when the insurance dividends come in.
- Laundry income is slightly over budget for the period. This is due to the timing of the payments.
- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the period. We received a large amount of money from HUD to cover the first 5 months including May. I discussed this with our accountant, and he recommends we download the money and get it out of the Eloccs system. For March and April we drew down a monthly percentage of what was given. In May we will exceed the annual budget.

Expenses:

- Administrative salaries are under budget for the period. We will continue to be under budget until the next 3 pay month.
- Legal expenses are slightly over budget for the period, we are seeking more evictions and legal action to reinforce collections.
- Travel is over budget for the period but under for the year. We have registered for the PHADA conference in June.
- Telephones are under budget for the period. Some of the difference is the timing of the bills.
- Sundry Administrative is slightly over budget for the period.
- Computer supplies are under budget for the period. We will be looking to upgrade at least 2 more computers this year, we held off in '23, but we will need to do some upgrades in 2024.
- Dues and Memberships are under budget for the period.
- Misc. Maintenance supplies are under budget.
- Electric is under budget for the period.
- Natural Gas is under budget for the period. We have had seasonal temperatures during this period, but the new systems are working well and keeping up with demand, even in the coldest periods.
- Maintenance salaries are on budget.
- Maintenance materials are under budget for the period. In renovating units, we are purchasing supplies and materials for those units. Only one of the two units renovated needed flooring and complete renovation.
- Extermination Cost is under budget. We are hopeful the bed bug situation is coming under control.
- Security alarm is over budget, we installed a “door open” sensor on the family laundry room to hopefully prevent the door from being open 24 hours per day.
- Ground maintenance is slightly under budget. January to March payments are shown.
- Blue Cross/Blue shield is slightly under budget.

The next meeting will be a 5:00PM on May 15th followed by dinner at Fernando's.

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

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director