

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, December 11th, 2024 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 Sean McDonnell, Commissioner Meg Rosner, Commissioner Eva Teller,

Also, Present: Kevin Ryan, Council Liaison Jeet Gulati

Absent: Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of November 20th. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Teller and seconded by Commissioner McDonnell. 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:

- Jeet reported that the council has been struggling with the budget and the shortfalls they are dealing with since the retirement of CFO George Lang. A new CFO has been hired and we are working on the problems. The Borough is looking at a long list of needs, but they are all very expensive. Commissioner Teller questioned how long the overlap with the new CFO was. Jeet responded about 2 weeks. Keith questioned why the council doesn't look into the staffing. We are up to 52 employees and reduced services where the Borough used to operate with 38 employees and the same number of residents. Jeet discussed the proposed Cannibus ordinance and the possibility of retail sales that will boost revenue. Keith questioned why no other person in the Borough is able to look at a budget or see these shortfalls in the last year or two. Jeet claims they tried, but the revenue declined this last year unexpectedly. Keith questioned why the Borough is enacting this increase, are we no longer anticipating the Bank Street project which will increase usage and revenue. Jeet could not answer the question

but gave a long answer. Commissioner Eufemia stated that the water quality in town is terrible, and no one is going to buy a house in a town that has brown water. Commissioner Eufemia brought up the Fluoride that is added to the water. Commissioner Teller elaborated regarding the toxicity of the substance. It costs the Borough a fortune each year to add the Fluoride and buy the chemical. Commissioner Eufemia questioned Jeet as to whether the Council ever gets involved with Businesses coming into town? The number of small bodegas and lack of banks in town is concerning. How are we becoming a destination when there are no destination stores?

Committee Report:

Resident Council Report:

Keith gave the Resident council report:

- Hot water in buildings 3 and 4. It's unusual as it's a new system. I determined it is not a cartridge problem, but a recirculation problem. We have the new recirculatory and are just trying to get the stainless-steel flanges.
- We received a cookie delivery from the Methodist Church for the seniors. One resident was concerned we are not doing anything for the children. The resident who used to do the gift bags has died, so another will take over. Keith estimates there are about 57 kids currently living at the Authority.

Resolutions:

Discussion Items:

- **Piping Project:** Keith discussed the current project and where we are at the moment. He described the completion of the initial project and that it was a good project for both the HA and the contractor as it was 3 smaller buildings so the project was manageable. We had little to no resident disturbance during the process. He described how certain work had to be done during the warmer months when the heating system can be drained.
- **New Member:** The board discussed the resignation letter received from Commissioner Lance. The letter was accepted. Kevin Ryan introduced himself and his interest in the Board.
- **Meeting Dates:** the Board discussed the proposed dates. Changes were made to the December date. Members

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently 99 % Occupancy. We have just completed a 4-bedroom and a studio unit that is occupied in November. We are currently working on a 3-bedroom unit from a tenant that requires a larger unit. She will be moving into that unit in mid-December. We will either be bringing in a new person for the 2-bedroom or possibly moving a person from a neighboring 3 bedroom to that unit. We just found out one of our seniors

passed away. That one bedroom will be renovated starting this month and is already rented.

- The infrastructure piping project for buildings 1 and 2 is moving along quickly. Currently, the contractor is installing long runs of piping for the heating and water system. All masonry holes have been drilled and most of the pipe hangers are in place. The contractors will begin testing and getting the hot and cold water system sanitized and ready to connect to the units. One hold up will be the underground connection between building one and two that will not be completed until the spring. We held the final close out meeting for the initial project, Building 3,4 and 5. Final payment on that project will be made this month.
- We have been working on the ACOP document and will finish the document next year. Unfortunately, HUD has delayed the rollout of the new changes to at least October of 2025 due to problems with the software. We will be ready well in advance of the official roll out.

Financial Update: October

In review of the financial reports for the month of November 2024, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with positive results. I have included a variety of reports for your review. Please note I will have new financial reports available at the meetings. Our Accountant will review and adjust the numbers on Tuesday.

Income:

- Residential income has come in over budget. Even with the budgeted increase we are still exceeding the amount. We have increased this amount in the 2025 budget.
- Excess utility is over budget for the period. Air conditioners are beginning to come out now, so this number will come down.
- Interest income is over budget for the period. We are now getting current rates on our accounts and have modified the 2025 budget projections.
- Other Operating receipts are under budget for the period.
- Laundry income is under budget for the period. Laundry income comes early the following month.

- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the period. We received a large amount of money from HUD to cover the last 3 months of the Federal fiscal year. (October, November, December) For the balance of the year, we will be depending on continuing resolutions until HUD and the Federal Government can finalize a budget. HUD funded the next two months, leaving just December's subsidy to round out the year.

Expenses:

- Administrative salaries are over budget for the period. We had our 3 pay period in November.
- Legal expenses are well over budget for the period. We are moving aggressively against a couple tenants with past due balances.
- Staff training is under budget for the period. Two commissioners are taking courses this fall.
- Accounting and Audit is on budget for the year.
- Telephones are under budget for the period.
- Sundry Administrative is over budget for the period. This account initially gets most of the activity, and the accountant adjusts the amounts to other categories. Much of the expense came from the purchase of the bike racks on the senior porches.
- Dues and Memberships are over budget for the period due to the IREM renewal.
- Misc. office supplies are under budget.
- Water is under budget for the period. The next bill comes out in early January.
- Electric is under budget for the period.
- Natural gas is over budget for the period. The heat is on and we are sporadically using it.
- Maintenance salaries are over budget for the period. We had a 3 pay event in November.
- Maintenance materials are under budget for the period. In renovating units, we are purchasing supplies and materials for those units. We will be renovating 4 units in the coming months.
- Extermination Cost is under budget. We have been dealing with a bed bug problem which we hope is under control.
- Ground maintenance is over budget. All the lawns and gardens have been cleaned and prepared for winter.

- Blue Cross/Blue shield is well over budget. We had a staff person opt for a family plan which dramatically increased the cost. This payment is retroactive fees going back to July.
- Extraordinary maintenance is over budget. The repair and replacement of cameras that were not in capital fund are shown here. The Accountant may move this expense to another category.

The enclosed financials include Income Statement for the Current Period-November 2024(VS Budget), and General Ledger Cash account for November.

The next meeting will be a 5:00PM on January 15th followed by dinner at Fernando's. The meeting was adjourned by a motion made by Commissioner Rivenburgh and seconded by Commissioner Teller.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director

