

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH  
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 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 Kevin Ryan, Commissioner Sean McDonnell, Commissioner Anne Studholme, Commissioner Eva Teller

**Also, Present: Karla Gonzalez, potential member.**

**Absent:** Commissioner Meg Rosner, Jeet Gulati, Council Liaison

**Approval of Minutes:** Regular Meeting Minutes of January 15<sup>th</sup>. 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 an 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.

- None

**Borough Council Liaison Report:**

- Keith gave a report on the note he received from Councilman Gulati wanting to speak about the lease agreement on our gravel parking lot that was signed and paid for in 1997. The lease runs until 2047 and does not need to be altered. There was a lengthy discussion by the board on the topic, especially focused on how the town should be helping us, not constantly fighting us and trying to get money from us. Keith will have tried to reach out to Councilman Gulati but is not getting any response from him. He will keep reaching out and let the board know what the Council is looking to do.

**Committee Report:**

- Keith gave an update on the hiring process for the new Executive Director. We are publicly advertising in the following locations: Our Website, PHADA, NAHRO, Career Builder, Linked In, NJ Jobs website. We did not choose to use any of the print media, as most of it has stopped production and we received a poor response in the past. To date

we have received 32 resumes for the position and Keith is preparing a synopsis for the committee. The position is open until March 15<sup>th</sup> and all applicants have been contacted. Keith will provide the committee with the qualified resumes on or after the 15<sup>th</sup> of March and will notify the other applicants of that decision. The committee will decide how many of the remaining applicants they will interview.

### **Resident Council Report:**

- Keith gave the report.
  - Karla and Navneet donated the candy for the Valentines Day gift bags. Lynmarie and Chelsea stuffed all the bags, and several resident volunteers delivered them to the various units.
  - The group discussed the upcoming Easter Egg hunt. Once again, they will be partnering with the Connect Church group for the second year. Last year was a great success, so they are working with Pastor Frank to organize this year's event.
  - The family laundry room lock was replaced. Keith mentioned the lockset is a special commercial lock that is provided by Alan Security. Because of its high use nature, it was expensive, over \$700 dollars installed. It works well and the issue has been solved.
  - Residents from all the affected buildings report the Hot water issue has been solved. Keith reported he had a specialist from Areco come in and look at the heat exchanger. They spent a couple hours cleaning, flushing and getting small pockets of air our of the system. The issues are resolved.

### **Resolutions:**

- None

### **Discussion Items:**

- **Piping Project:** Keith discussed the current project and where the contractors are. We are currently substantially done in buildings 1 and 2 with most of the heavy piping. The contractor will fill and clean the new piping for inspections and then begin the process of connecting the individual units. He will begin to work on the office and plan to install the boiler piping in buildings 6 and 7 this winter so that when we are able to turn off the heat in May he can begin the final connections in all the buildings. The water piping will probably be left for next winter in building 6 and 7.
- **Capital Funding:** Keith voiced his concerns with the Administration move this past month to freeze all the federal funding. We have over \$1. Million dollars in the federal system to pay for the capitol improvements that are underway. This money, including our operating funds, were temporarily frozen by the Federal Government. Keith and others complained to HUD and the Senators and Congressman that represent us, and a Federal Judge got involved unlocking the funds. Keith explained legally we cannot draw down the funds without invoices and checks to back them up.

## **Executive Director Report:**

- We are currently 98 % Occupied. We have 2 bedrooms that has been renovated, and we are downsizing the person next door from 3 bedrooms. We are also taking possession of a 3-bedroom family unit where the current tenant has moved into a senior unit. We just received notice that one of our family side studios will become available on February 1. This will be a quick turnover and be ready by February 15 for a new person.
- The infrastructure piping project for buildings 1 and 2 is moving along quickly. Building 2 is nearing completion and currently the contractor is working on installation in building 1. Temporary inlets and outlets will allow us to fill and clean the new piping so that it can be put in service.
  - We will be starting on the office piping this winter, which will include installing a new boiler just for the office. This will take the office off the main loop and give it better control of the heat without changing all the valves and piping.
- The waiting list update letters have been received, and the lists have been updated. The wait list will open on March 1 and close on May 31 for all apartment types. We currently have 79 people on the wait list, with 24 just for Senior units.
- We have had some hot water issues in building 3,4 and 5. The heat exchanger has been adjusted, and Mack Industries has been contracted to service the exchangers once the weather warms a bit. Each unit will be torn down, cleaned and sensors checked and replaced as needed. Mack is a factory certified technician for these units.
- We had a bit of a financial scare this month. The President signed an executive order that froze all federal funds including all our past and future capital and operating funds. Fortunately, after a nationwide outcry from everyone from small nonprofits, Medicare recipients, contractors, service people and Housing executives he rescinded the obviously illegal order. We have access to all our funds at this time, but we are looking at steps to remove as much as we can from the federal government while complying with the existing laws.
- The Executive Director advertisement has been posted on the following websites: NAHRO (National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials), PHADA (Public Housing Authority Directors Association), Monster.com, Linked-In, CareerBuilder, and the New Jersey jobs database. To date we have had a good response, with 22 resumes submitted. I have reviewed and tagged 7 for further consideration.

## **Financial Update: January**

In review of the financial reports for the month of January 2025, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the month with positive results.

### **Income:**

- Residential income has come in over budget. Even with the budgeted increase we are still exceeding the amount. You will notice there are two deposits into the subsidy account. The second is for February. We have increased this amount in the 2025 budget.
- Excess utilities are on budget for the period.
- Interest income is under budget for the period. We are now getting current rates on our accounts and have modified the 2025 budget projections. We use this account for insurance dividends also.
- Other Operating receipts are under budget for the period.
- Laundry income is slightly below budget for the period.
- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the period. For the beginning of this year, we will be depending on continuing resolutions until HUD and the Federal Government can finalize the budget. HUD funded January and February, which will give them time to finalize a budget. The February subsidy hit our bank account on January 31, which is why this number is so far over.

### Expenses:

- Administrative salaries are under budget for the period and the year. The shortage helps to offset the 3 pay month that is coming in May this year.
- Legal expenses are on budget for the period. We are moving aggressively against a couple tenants with past due balances this year which has increased the expense.
- Staff training is under budget for the period. We will have at least one new commissioner this year which will increase this expense.
- Accounting and Audit are on budget for the year.
- Telephones are under budget for the period.
- Sundry Administrative is over budget for the period. The expenses in this account were monthly office cleaning, the annual board dinner, monthly payroll fees, Secure Shredding and petty cash expenses. .
- Dues and Memberships are slightly over budget for the period.
- Misc. office supplies are under budget. This will reconcile with 4190.

- Water is under budget for the period. The bills have been posted, and we are on budget for the period. One of our 4-meter heads need to be replaced and the parts are on site. The Water department says the repair is scheduled.
- Electric is slightly under budget for the period.
- Natural gas is over budget for the period. The heat is on, and we are continuously using it. We are slightly over for the period, but this will come back in line later this year.
- Maintenance salaries are under budget for the period. This will be back in line with the 3 pay in May.
- Maintenance materials are over budget for the period. In renovating units, we are purchasing supplies and materials for those units. We are slightly over for the year, but relative to the number of units that were renovated.
- Extermination Cost is under budget. We have been dealing with a bed bug problem which we hope is under control.
- Ground maintenance is on budget. All the lawns and gardens were cleaned and prepared for winter. The Bulbs are beginning to have shoots, so warmer weather is close.
- Boiler Contract costs is well over budget. This was due to the renewal of our water treatment contract and repairs to the hot water heat exchanger by Mack and Whitfield Schneider.
- Blue Cross/Blue shield is on budget. Adjustments have been made in the 2025 budget to allow for the member/child cost that is now included.

The next meeting will be a 7:00PM on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

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

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director