

**MINUTES OF THE HIGHTSTOWN HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS  
WEDNESDAY, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**Call to Order:** Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**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:** by Keith LePrevost showed that those present and absent were as follows:

- **Present:** Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director, Chairperson James Eufemia, Commissioner Esther Velázquez, Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh, Commissioner Carole Nelson, Vice Chair, Commissioner Christopher Moraitis, and Commissioner Yolanda Swiney.
- **Also Present:** Council Liaison Steven Misiura
- **Absent:** Commissioner Pascale Emmanuel

**Approval of Minutes:** Regular Meeting Minutes of:

- September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Moraitis, seconded by Commissioner Swiney. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- Executive Session Minutes of July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Swiney, seconded by Commissioner Velázquez. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**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 from the public were present.

**Committee Reports:** None

**Resolutions:**

- **2015-11 To approve the Disposition Policy.** Keith discussed the HA does not currently have an active disposition policy, and there are items we need to dispose of. Keith will prepare a list of items and research the current fair market value of the items. The policy will dictate how those items will be disposed of. Commissioner Nelson motioned to approve the disposition policy which was seconded by Commissioner Velázquez. The resolution was unanimously approved.
- **2015-12 To recommend re-appointment of Yolanda Swiney to the HA Board of Commissioners.** Keith discussed the expiring term of Yolanda, and the value she adds to our commission. Mr. Moraitis discussed the cost of training a new commissioner and the time it takes to orient new members. Commissioner Nelson motioned to approve the

resolution to recommend reappointment of Yolanda Swiney which was seconded by Commissioner Velázquez. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Discussion Items:**

- **Keith** discussed the camera installation and the benefits of the new system. He explained the access is limited at this time as he is hesitant to have our police trained in the system when it is unclear how long we are going to have a police force. Mr. Misiura commented we should have our police trained to use our system as they are our force today, and there is no immediate plans to replace them. The Commissioners agreed and Keith will invite the police to attend our training on the system.
- **Keith** discussed the importance of continuing to plan for the future and dedicate funds from operations to supplement our capital expenditures. We will be requiring boiler upgrades in the near future and he would like to bring a mechanical engineer on board to begin the design of phased boiler installations. Commissioner Eufemia also requested we keep our eye on our roofs. It has been at least 15 years since any roofing was done, and that need to be another priority. Keith will develop plans over the next several months to address these capital needs.
- **Keith** presented a proposed list of meeting dates and times for 2016 and asked the members for comments or suggestions for meeting times that are convenient for them. It was agreed that the third Wednesday at 7:00PM is the best time.
- **Commissioner Eufemia** brought up the Boroughs Affordable Housing Plan and where we are in the process. Mr. Misiura mentioned there really is not a plan at this point, but legal maneuvering. Hightstown has joined a group of other municipalities from Mercer County in contesting the Fair Share Housing Centers report. Keith spoke on how he feels the HA should be part of any discussion in the borough when it comes to affordable housing. We are the only entity that has the ability to create new housing or dedicate our housing stock towards the meeting of the commitment. The borough has shut the HA out of the discussions, as they feel the HA is uncooperative. Keith stated the letter from the attorney with the 4.5 million dollar request was intentional, to stop the process so that the Borough would rethink their planning, and approach it in a way that is acceptable to HUD, who owns HA. Now it is up to the board of Commissioner and the Council to come up with a reasonable plan that can be presented to HUD for consideration. Keith feels the borough has a much better chance of success with their affordable housing plan if we all work together and submit a plan as a unified group. Mr. Misiura suggested we consider a working group from the HA, planning board and council to be the COAH working group to work out a plan. Keith, Commissioner Rivenburgh and Commissioner Eufemia will represent the HA. Steve will get back to us and hopefully we can set up meeting.

**Executive Director Report: Keith discussed the following:**

- We are currently at 100% occupancy. We have 1 notice to vacate from a tenant who is moving to Morrisville.
- The waiting has been reviewed and updated. We are leaving all of our waiting lists closed until January due to strong response from the recent update letter. We currently have 106 families actively waiting for a variety of sized apartments.
- The camera project is complete. The property can now be viewed and the cameras controlled from any computer with an internet connection, or internet

connected portable device, such as an iPhone or iPad. A log-in and password is required and Keith will be the administrator of the account.

- The fall plantings have been done and the mums look great. Spring bulbs will be planted in November.
- The two 120 gallon hot water tanks have been replaced in Building 1. The tanks were found to be leaking and evidence of deterioration. The new tanks have been installed on blocks, off the floor to promote air circulation under the tanks. We should consider systematic replacement of the balance of the 5 tanks.
- Fencing work has been done on Rogers Avenue and behind building 6. All of our wood fencing has been replaced and painted.
- Porch and balcony painting is complete with the balcony floors on building 1 being completed. Buildings 3-4-5 will be done next summer.
- The Resident garden has been a great success this year. We have 4 residents that are working in the plots, and if there is enough interest we will build 2 new plots next spring. We will be building one resident garden on the senior side- in the location of “Pearls” garden. This is conveniently located between the two buildings, right near the mailboxes and laundry room.
- All of the porches and balconies on the property have been scrubbed and power washed.
- We have made our annual PILOT payment of \$31,854.14 to the borough in the beginning of October. This is up from last year due to stronger rents from our residents and lower utility costs.
- We are 100% compliant with the Community Service requirement as outlined by HUD.
- After bidding our landscape work, Growing Concerns will continue to be our landscape contractor for the next 3 years.
- The 2016 budget that has been approved in Congress is near sequestration levels of funding, Capitol funding is being cut again, and HUD is coming out with new regulations for us to comply with, Such as the AFFH Tool, Section 3 reporting, Other Post-Employment Benefits study and Executive Compensation studies. We have been working and complying with all of HUD’s requests and we are waiting for further guidance before we begin the process of completing the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing tool. The final toolkit is not available, but the completed tool remains due next summer. They are estimating 3-400 hours to complete the tool. The Borough, as a recipient of federal funds (Home, Balanced Housing) will also have to complete the tool. I have reached out to the Administrator to hopefully share information so that our completed work resembles each other. I have gotten no response from the Borough. I will reach out again when a working tool is available.

- We have a part time employee out on leave. They had a foot issue that turned into a serious bone infection. They have had surgery and are recovering. We hope they will be able to come back to work by early January.
- We completed our full property inspections during October. We generated 165 work orders from our inspections.
- I am researching the old security cameras and equipment to determine if there is any value in the equipment. The contractor left the cameras and equipment here in our garage. The other alternate was to have them dispose of the equipment. Broken down into components, some of the cameras and lenses have value and can be sold.

### **Financial Update: September/October, 2015**

In review of the financial reports for the months of September and October 2015, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with positive results.

Highlights include:

Income:

- Residential income has come in slightly above budget due to incomes of our residents.
- Excess utilities are freezer charges for the month.
- Other Operating receipts includes maintenance fees and dividends from our insurance company.
- Laundry income is slightly under budget for the month, but over budget for the year.
- Subsidy income is slightly over budget due to the Federal 2015 budget. We have operated this year under a continuing resolution, and HUD has promised (now that the federal budget year has ended) we will have a final budget number for 2015. They will make whatever adjustment to our subsidy sometime in September. This adjustment did not happen, and the Congress passed another continuing resolution to fund the government until December (Based on previous year funding levels). We have received our subsidy allocation for the next 3 months. As of this date we do not have a current ACC (Annual Contributions Contract).

Expenses:

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are on budget for the month of September, and over budget for October due to the 3 pays in October. We are on track for the year.
- Legal Expenses are over budget due to review of court filings for the Boroughs affordable housing plans.

- Sundry Administrative is over budget for the year due to the OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) study that was conducted in preparation for our 2015 audit. HUD requires this study every 3 years.
- Audit Fees are under budget for the month, but on budget for this year.
- Electricity is over budget due to the unusually warm temperatures in September. We were an average of 4 degrees above normal, resulting in higher air conditioner utilization.
- Gas continues to be well below budget due to the radiator valve work done last year and our new purchasing agreement.
- Water is well over budget. I have been in touch with the Water department to review one of our meter readings. This past quarter, one of our meters was 50% higher than it has ever recorded. We discovered the problem was in 2 apartments with toilets that were running. One tenant has had a stroke and mild dementia, while the other tenant claims it has been running for months, but it still worked so they did not say anything. Those two toilet cost us over \$2,000 this past quarter. I have asked the water department if they can give us more frequent readings so we can spot problems more quickly.
- Misc. Maintenance supplies are over budget due to apartment turnover and renovations.
- Extermination costs are over budget due to bed bugs being treated in one apartment.
- Maintenance contract costs are over budget due to cycle painting and concrete repair.
- Extraordinary maintenance included the replacement of 2, 125 gallon hot water storage tanks that were leaking.

**Announcements:** The next meeting is scheduled for December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned by a motion made at 8:45PM.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director