

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HIGHTSTOWN HOUSING  
AUTHORITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOUSING  
WEDNESDAY, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**Call to Order:** Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to order at 7:03 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, Commissioner Esther Velázquez, Commissioner James Eufemia, Chair, Commissioner Robert Hung, Commissioner Christopher Moraitis, Commissioner Brent Rivenburgh and Commissioner Yolanda Swiney.
- **Also Present:** Seth Kurs, Council Liaison, Residents Pat Albanese, William Moody, Tyron Haws, Chester Diaz and Charles Holland.
- **Absent:** Commissioner Carole Nelson

**Approval of Minutes:** Regular Meeting Minutes of June 18<sup>th</sup> and July 16<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Hung motioned to approve the minutes as written. This was seconded by Commissioner Rivenburgh and approved by the board.

Commissioner Velazquez questioned why the Public portion of the meeting was not at the beginning of the meeting. Keith commented we changed that for the last meeting and will change the order of the agenda for the future meetings.

**Committee Reports: Budget Presentation**

- Keith provided the commissioners with paper copies of the power point documents explaining the elements that go into the 2015 budget. The projected revenues for 2015 exceed the projected expenses by approximately \$30 thousand dollars.

**Resolutions:**

- **Resolution 2014-6 to approve the submission of the 2015 budget to the State of New Jersey. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.**

**Discussion Items:**

- **5 Year Plan Submission:** Keith provided the board copies of the 5 year plan that needs to be submitted to HUD. He explained the plan is a proposed 5 year capital spending plan. Keith has been working on a 20 year plan, so this submission is the first 5 years of his 20 year plan. Keith discussed with the board the large capital needs that are coming in the latter part of his 20 year plan, starting around year 10-12. Keith will continue to look at grant opportunities to cover all or part of these expenses.
- **Disaster and Emergency Management Plan:** Keith discussed the plan that was originally presented to the board in April. He has sent the plan a couple times to the OEM, Jim Sidelinger without response. Keith feels it is important for the Borough to be part of the plan, but we need to move forward if they do not respond with our requests. The board agrees and Keith will prepare the resolution for the next meeting.

**Executive Director Report:**

- We are currently at 99% occupancy. We have renovated the apartment and will be transferring one of our senior to the one bedroom apartment. We are renovating the studio apartment and have a tenant for that unit October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Landscape and drainage projects have been completed for this year.
- We have begun the process of replacing all of the wood fencing. It is being replaced with the same material, but with new posts and solid color stained on both sides. To date 240 feet have been completed. We will complete another 160 feet this fall. The project will be completed in the spring.
- The large trees on the property have been trimmed for both health and function. I had limbs removed to raise the canopy, and to remove limbs that overhang roofs and parking areas. We also had two trees removed, one Pear tree in front of building 6 that was planted right next to the sidewalk, it was poorly shaped and leaning toward the building. The second was a Locust tree that was next to the maintenance garage. This tree had several dead limbs and two large limbs hanging on the roof of the garage. Once trimmed, there was very little left of the tree, so I had it removed.
- I have sent our Disaster plan to Jim Sidelinger who is the Borough of Hightstown's head of the Office of Emergency Management for review and comment. I will report when I hear back from him.
- The resident gardens got off to a slow start, but they have been cared for and have produced a decent amount of vegetables. We will be advertising this winter to recruit gardeners for next year.
- The HUD safety and security grant has been submitted. We applied for \$75,000 to upgrade our camera systems. We should be hearing by the end of this month whether we were funded or not.
- As previously reported, I made a formal request to HUD to allow us to lock our utility consumption at 2012 levels. This is allowed for budgeting purposes in HA's that use an ESCO to accomplish their energy upgrades. I have made the argument with HUD that we accomplished more than the ESCO proposed, at little cost to the HA or HUD utilizing grants and other state, county and local programs. HUD allows the additional funding to cover debt service to pay the ESCO. I would like to use the additional funding for current capital needs and to establish an R&R (Reserves for Replacement) account for long term capital projects such as roofing and boilers. Our HUD financial representative responded favorably and asked me to submit our budget with those assumptions. This will provide a financial incentive of \$40-\$50 thousand dollars per year to the

HA for capital projects. I will keep everyone up to date as our budget are submitted into the federal system this fall.

- I have imputed all the data into the Energy Star Portfolio Manager program to begin the process of having our property Energy Star Certified. HUD has announced it will begin using the information from “Portfolio Manager” in 2015 as a basis to gauge our utility reimbursements. All public housing agencies will have to input their utility data into the “Portfolio Manager” system in order to receive reimbursements for utilities. I have been working on this for almost 2 years now, so we are well ahead of the curve on this new HUD mandate.
- I have been working on completing our HUD 5 year plan and Annual plan updates. Pete and I went over the plan this month and we are hoping to submit the plan to HUD in October.

#### **Financial Update: July, August, 2014**

In review of the financial reports for the months of July and August, 2014, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the months with positive results. Our utility costs continue to be below budgeted levels thanks to the work done over the past year. Highlights include:

##### Income:

- Residential income has come in slightly below budget due to incomes of new residents.
- Excess Utilities are under budget due to a cooler summer with fewer A/C's installed.
- Laundry income is on budget for the year.
- Subsidy income is above budget due to the Federal 2014 budget.

##### Expenses:

- Administrative and Maintenance salaries are below our budgeted levels.
- Staff training is over budget for the year due to registrations for a Rutgers courses.
- Sundry Administrative is over budget due to the cost of an emergency room visit and follow up for a part time employee that went to the emergency room. He was attacked by a previous tenant and her boyfriend late one evening. He was responding to a commotion in the courtyard.
- Audit is over budget due to the annualization of the expense.
- Sundry Administrative is over budget for the year due to healthcare costs associated with employee incident.
- Water is under budget, with the quarterly that arrived at the end of June, we have recorded the lowest consumption on record with 104,600 cubic feet of water verses a 5 year average of 152,000 cubic feet for the same quarter. The last 3 quarters have demonstrated similar results. We will continue to monitor our consumption and compliance.

- Gas is slightly under budget for the period and approximately 18% below budget for the year. .
- Electric is under budget for the year. Our KWH usage has been reduced by 28% which is relating to the dollar savings of similar percentage. This is substantially due to the LED lighting upgrades, Laundry upgrades, and boiler controls.
- Boiler contract costs are over budget and will stabilize over the coming months. We have completed most of the major work on our boiler plants and now will be completing smaller projects designed to improve efficiency and reliability.
- Electrical Contract costs are over budget due to the installation of new lighting.
- Grounds maintenance is over budget due to seasonal plantings, mulching, tree trimming and lawn repair work.
- Pension expense is over budget due to annual payment into the pension system.

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

**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.

Patricia Albanese discussed issues relating to water quality, landscaping, reserved parking and cigarette butts. Tyron Haws discussed the resident council and what is involved.

**Announcements:** The next meeting is scheduled for October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 7:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned by a motion made at 8:20pm into executive session.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director