

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH
OF HIGHTSTOWN, NEW JERSEY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, January 17th, 2024 AT 5:00 P.M.**

Chairperson James Eufemia called meeting to Order at 5:00 PM

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 Brent Rivenburgh, Commissioner Jameellah Lance, Commissioner Anne Studholme, Commissioner Terry Parliaros.

Also, Present: Chelsea Graham

Absent: Commissioner Sean McDonnell, Commissioner Eva Teller, Liaison Jeet Gulati

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of December 13th. The minutes were motioned to be approved by Commissioner Studholme and seconded by Commissioner Lance. Minutes were unanimously approved. A correction was made to the spelling of Commissioner Lance's name.

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.

None

Borough Council Liaison Report:

- None- Mickey noted there has been 0 movement by the Borough on the Cooperation agreement. He will follow up.

Committee Report:

- **Appointment of Officers:**
 - Chair. Commissioner Parliaros motioned for Commissioner Eufemia to serve as Chair. Commissioner Rivenburgh seconded the motion, which was approved by the board in a roll call vote.
 - Vice Chair. Commissioner Eufemia nominated Commissioner Rivenburgh to serve as Vice Chair. Commissioner Studholme seconded the motion which the Board approved in a roll call vote.

- Committees:
 - Personnel. Commissioner McDonnell, Commissioner Teller
 - Finance Commissioner Lance, Commissioner Rivenburgh
 - Buildings and Construction Commissioner Parliaros
 - Development Commissioner Studholme, Commissioner Parliaros
 - By-Laws and Policy Commissioner Teller, Commissioner Studholme

Resident Council Report:

- Chelsea gave the report for the Resident council. They discussed the water temperature in buildings 3,4 and 5. Residents are complaining it is not hot enough. Keith had the heat exchanger turned up a couple degrees. Part of the problem is the extreme cold and the crawlspace doors being open due to the workman.

Resolutions:

- 2024-1 To Approve the Officers as nominated. Approved by voice vote.
- 2024-2 To Approve the meeting dates as offered. Approved by voice vote.
- 2024-3 To approve writing off \$642.67 as uncollectable. Approved by voice vote.

Discussion Items:

- Keith discussed the piping and infrastructure project that is well underway. He discussed the core drilling of firewalls, installation of hangers and supports and piping that is beginning this week. So far the contractor has been responsive and working out well. We will keep you up to date on the progress. As you can see in your packet I have been in touch with our HUD Washington people regarding the funding. Although we don't have the balance of the money in the bank, they are guaranteeing it is available as soon as possible. The government needs to finalize a 2024 budget before they are going to release more funding.

Executive Director Report:

- We are currently at 98% Occupancy. We currently have renovated a studio unit that was vacated at the end of December and ended up relocating a tenant in another studio to the open one bedroom after several unsuccessful attempts to fill the unit.
- The infrastructure piping project has begun. The contractors have begun installing pipe hangers and core drilling the firewalls where needed. In January they will begin hanging pipe and fittings throughout the crawlspaces. We are making sure the work they are doing will be accessible and easy for our staff to access in the future.
- I reached out to HUD Washington again to bring them up to date and check on our long-term funding. According to the attached letter the grant has been fully funded and we are just waiting for signatures.
- The waiting lists are open! Given the difficulties we recently have had filling a one-bedroom unit highlights the need for us to open the lists and expand the list.

- We have found so many people have been on the list so long, that when their name comes up, they no longer have the immediate need to move.
- Vaccine clinic, Flu and Covid were held by the health department. We had a reasonable turnout, but disappointingly there were fewer residents than expected. Our hope is for a good response from our tenants, but they fail to show up on the day.
 - Blood Pressure clinic. The health department holds a clinic here monthly, and last month only one resident showed up. Chelsea calls, and we notice all the buildings, but there is only so much we can do.

Financial Update: December 2023

In review of the financial reports for the month of December 2023, the Hightstown Housing Authority completed the month with positive results. Unfortunately, Pete got to the books before all the reports were run, so they are a bit confusing.

Income:

- Residential income has come in over budget. This is due to the new tenants having strong incomes. Rent amounts have been modified in the 2024 budget.
- Excess utility is under budget for the period. This is a budget issue that will be resolved.
- Interest income is over budget for the period. We are now getting current rates on our accounts. Adjustments have been made in the 2024 budget.
- Other Operating receipts are under budget for the period and over for the year.
- Laundry income is slightly over budget for the period.
- Operating Subsidy income is over budget for the period. Starting in April we saw the adjusted numbers and final numbers for the year. We should be receiving higher subsidy amounts continuing this year. Before any prorations we should be expecting about \$25.5 thousand each month in 2024. It is questionable the amounts going forward until the Government settles on a budget. They have provided an amount for January and February that is below our budgets.

Expenses:

- Administrative salaries are over budget for the period. The overage is from the 3 pay month of December.
- Legal expenses are under budget for the period, and slightly over for the year. We are seeking more evictions and legal action to reinforce collections.
- Travel is under budget for the period and the year.
- Telephones are under budget for the period. Having all the staff on one network is helpful and makes communications much easier. We are over budget for the year due to the fact one phone had to be purchased outright to finance the other 3.

- Sundry Administrative is over budget for the period. Pete reclassified some expenses during the transition period. This has become a repository for several line items. Things will be moved and readjusted as we move through this year.
- 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 slightly over budget for the period. This is due to increasing the membership in certain organizations.
- Misc. Maintenance supplies are under budget.
- Water and Sewer experienced a 17% increase this year that is unbudgeted. The new rates are included in our 2024 budget.
- Electric is over budget for the period, The expense is in the new system.
- Natural Gas is under budget for the period. We have had cooler than normal temperatures during this period, but the new systems are working well.
- Maintenance salaries are under budget. December is the 3rd pay month.
- Maintenance materials are over budget for the period. As we are tuning over units, we are changing all the switches, outlets, base trim, and lighting. Fortunately, we have turned over 10 units this year. We have flooring and base trim inventoried for the units we are turning over, which comes mostly from the capitol budget.
- Electrical contract cost is over budget due to the replacement of 12 building light fixtures.
- Extermination Cost is over budget due to a bed-bug situation we are dealing with.
- Ground maintenance is on budget. This will come in slightly over budget for the year.
- Blue Cross/Blue shield. We experienced a 20% price hike on January 1. Fortunately, a larger increase was budgeted, but the expense is still larger than budgeted. We added a new employee that increased the costs, but they are budgeted in 2024.
- Collection Losses-includes all losses encountered during the year that are considered uncollectable. Even though this statement shows a \$0 balance, we are asking the board to approve \$642.67 to cover a tenant balance that moved out and left a balance that is considered uncollectable.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 21st at 7:00

The meeting was adjourned by a motion made by Commissioner Eufemia.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Allen Keith LePrevost, Executive Director