

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE BOROUGH OF
HIGHLAND PARK



The Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Highland Park met in a Regular Session in the Community Room of the S.J. Kronman Apartments located at 242 South Sixth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ at 6:30 PM on January 14, 2015, the hour and date duly established for the holding of said meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Sedehi.

Housing Director Blaha read a Notice of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act P.L. 1975, C.231 which provided that notice of this meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Highland Park was provided in the following manner:

On December 17, 2014, a copy of the notice of this meeting setting forth the date, time and location of this regular meeting was posted on the Housing Authority's official designated bulletin board located at 242 South Sixth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ, sent to Borough Hall for posting and was faxed to the Home News Tribune and Star Ledger and posted on the website.

Upon roll call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT

Commissioners:

Morgan Chen, Commissioner
Steve Chudnick, Commissioner
Charlotte Quaintance, Commissioner
Diane Reh, Chairwoman
Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner
Amanda Thomas, Vice Chair
Burton Weltman, Commissioner

Council Liaison:

Susan Welkovits
Joshua Fine

Administration:

Donna Brightman, Executive Director
Kathy Blaha, Housing Director-WHA
Runi Sriwardena, Housing Director-HP
Mike Yannuzzi, Maintenance Manager-WHA
Larry Stecker, Maintenance Director – WHA
Bill Snyder, Section 8

Authority General Counsel:

Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

Other:
Bill Katchen, Accountant

Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on Dec. 10, 2014 was made by Commissioner Chudnick and seconded by Commissioner Chen.

Discussion

Commissioner Sedehi stated that Dolores Van Liew's name is misspelled on page 4.

ROLL CALL:	Chen	Chudnick	Quaintance	Reh	Sedehi	Thomas	Weltman
AYES:	Chen	Chudnick	Quaintance	Reh	Sedehi	Thomas	
NAYS:	None						
Abstain:	None						
Absent:	Weltman						

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Public Comment:

Nancy Bernstein, 5R, stated that her apartment got hit in the recent flood. The ceiling split in her closet and her expensive coats and handbags got wet. She has NJ Manufacturer's insurance but before she takes the articles to the cleaners she needs to know who would pay her \$500 deductible.

Counsel Corrison stated that the event is still being investigated and usually deductibles are not covered.

Chairwoman Reh stated that she came in a little late and did not know if the flood was discussed prior as it is still under investigation.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she could give the information to Kathi DiTomasso and she would submit it to the insurance company to see if they would cover it, but there are no promises.

Karen Jackson, 3P, stated that the floors were dirty and she cleans them and the same for the laundry room as it hasn't been cleaned in months and months.

Commissioner Sedehi asked if she spoke to Ms. Sriwardena.

Chairwoman Reh asked her to put in a work order.

M.P. stated that Lauren Adams is very polite and helpful. She stated that we should use the intercom to inform tenants. (Executive Director Brightman said we were told not to use it as it got wet.) She then asked if the elevators would keep working.

Executive Director Brightman stated that they are going to be rebuilt from soup to nuts.

Ray Linares, 4Q, stated that tenants needed information about what was happening during the flood.

Ms. Sriwardena stated that the Fire Dept. requires tenants to stay in-place.

Dolores Van Liew, 4H, stated that the Firemen came to her door to check on her and stated that people could either stay in their apartment or go to the community room.

M.P. stated that everyone showed up to help and it was reminiscent of two years ago.

Commissioner Weltman stated that the staff did what they could to inform tenants by going door-to-door.

Juan Ratliff, family housing, 219 South Sixth Ave., asked why Kettly and Jani showed up on Sunday night as they don't work for us. He stated that he was still waiting for Gus Patino to paint his bathroom.

Ms. Jackson stated the rescue personnel were nice.

Ms. Bernstein stated that All Risk was doing a good job.

Chairwoman Reh introduced employee, Bill Snyder, as the Board wanted to meet him.

Mr. Snyder addressed the Board and told them what he does – certifications, re-certifications, HQS inspections, manages the waiting list and handles landlord/tenant complaints.

Communications: none

Reports:

Attorney's report – none

Accountant's report – Mr. Katchen reviewed the six month budget- to-actual report with the Board. He stated that we are on-point.

Staff reports – Commissioner Sedehi asked Ms. Sriwardena what constitutes an interim rent change.

Ms. Sriwardena stated that this would be a change in income.

Commissioner Weltman stated that Gus Patino does a terrific job with his report and Commissioner Sedehi agreed.

Committee Reports:

Facilities – Commissioner Chen reported that the landscaping bills and work items were reviewed and that we would seek an RFP from private concerns to compare prices.

The medical pull alarm problem was discussed and it was agreed that the camera would be repositioned to the alarm panel so that the camera could be played back to see what apartment the alarm came from.

Chairwoman Reh stated that she was glad that the pull cords worked during the emergency.

Commissioner Weltman – RAD committee

Commissioner Weltman reported that HPHA will receive a RAD CHAP award letter shortly. The Committee met with Mr. Katchen to discuss the upcoming documents that would be needed to proceed as well as establishing a non-profit. He gave a brief description of the program.

Commissioner Chudnick asked if the residents would be affected.

Commissioner Weltman responded that they would not be.

Chairwoman Reh stated that Ms. Welkovits is now the Council President and that Joshua Fine will be the new liaison to the Authority. She thanked Ms. Welkovits for all of her assistance during her tenure and said she was looking forward to working with Joshua Fine.

Commissioner Sedehi congratulated Ms. Welkovits.

RESOLUTIONS

a) Reso #2015-1 – Revised Annual Notice of Regular Meetings for 2015

Motion moved by Commissioner Chen and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to adopt Resolution #2015-1.

Discussion

Executive Director Brightman stated that this resolution is revised to change the November meeting which was scheduled on Veteran’s Day.

There was discussion about having the reorganization meeting start at 6:30 PM instead of 6 PM next year.

ROLL CALL:	Chen	Chudnick	Quaintance	Reh	Sedehi	Thomas	Weltman
AYES:	Chen	Chudnick	Quaintance	Reh	Sedehi	Thomas	Weltman
NAYS:	None						
Abstain:	None						
Absent:	None						

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2015-2 – Authorizing the Submission of the HPHA PHA Five Year and Annual Plan 2015

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adopt Resolution #2015-2.

Discussion

Maintenance Director Stecker explained that the plan outlines the Authority’s Capital needs for the next five years.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the residents participated in this process.

Commissioner Weltman asked about the Section 8 Homeownership program.

ROLL CALL: Chen Chudnick Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas Weltman
AYES: Chen Chudnick Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas Weltman
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2015-3 – Adopting the Monthly Bill List

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chen to adopt Resolution #2015-3.

Discussion

Commissioner Weltman asked if there was anything they needed to know.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it is nothing unusual but took the opportunity to let the Board know that she would be paying bills related to the recent flood as she receives the insurance money. She would keep a record and inform them what was paid.

Commissioner Sedehi asked if the staff was happy with Happy Software.

Executive Director Brightman stated that they are.

ROLL CALL: Chen Chudnick Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas Weltman
AYES: Chen Chudnick Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas Weltman
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

d) Reso #2015-4 – Resident Caused Damages

Motion moved by Commissioner Weltman and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2015-4.

Discussion

Commissioner Weltman asked where this process comes from.

Housing Manager Blaha explained that they looked at the actual cost of repairs as well as meeting with maintenance staff to obtain input.

Chairwoman Reh stated that the charges look reasonable.

Commissioner Sedehi asked if tenants received a copy.

Executive Director Brightman responded that they did.

ROLL CALL: Chen Chudnick Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas Weltman
AYES: Chen Chudnick Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas Weltman
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

e) Reso #2015-5 – Designate Fee Accountant

Motion moved by Commissioner Weltman and seconded by Commissioner Chen to adopt Resolution #2015-5.

Discussion

Executive Director Brightman stated that the Finance Committee met to review the RFP. A discussion ensued about why the contract was for one year and not two like the attorney's.

Counsel Corrison stated that a resolution needs to be passed before a two year contract should be offered.

Commissioner Weltman asked why we received only one RFP.

Counsel Corrison stated that there are very few accountants that specialize in PHA's.

ROLL CALL: Chen Chudnick Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas Weltman
AYES: Chen Chudnick Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas Weltman
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

f) Reso #2015-6 – Award Contract for Plumbing Services

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Thomas to adopt Resolution #2015-6.

ROLL CALL: Chen Chudnick Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas Weltman
AYES: Chen Chudnick Quaintance Reh Sedehi Thomas Weltman
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

g) Reso #2015-7 – HP Operating Budget Reso Approving the Budget for FYE 3/31/16

Motion moved by Commissioner Weltman and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adopt Resolution #2015-7.

Discussion

Mr. Katchen said the operating budget is mostly formula based with very little variables (salaries, insurance.) The budget anticipated a funding level of 85% down 4% from 2014. The largest increase was in health benefits – 8%. The amount of operating subsidy requested is \$371,492. Budget deficit is \$708.00. We have a revenue loss of \$65,000 due to funding.

Commissioner Sedehi asked about the Service Coordinator budgeted at \$11,500.

Mr. Katchen responded that the salary is \$5,000 and the rest is in-kind.

ROLL CALL:	Chen	Chudnick	Quaintance	Reh	Sedehi	Thomas	Weltman
AYES:	Chen	Chudnick	Quaintance	Reh	Sedehi	Thomas	Weltman
NAYS:	None						
Abstain:	None						
Absent:	None						

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

h) Reso #2015-8 – HP Reso for FY 4/1/15 to 3/31/16 (introducing State Budget including Capital Budget)

Motion moved by Commissioner Weltman and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2015-8.

Discussion

Mr. Katchen stated that this a new State budget form and it has tripled in size due to the Transparency Act which requires more detail and more disclosures of public salaries. This budget includes the Section 8 voucher budget which projects a deficit of \$2,910.00, funding is at 75% which is a lower funding level.

Commissioner Chudnick asked if there was enough surplus to cover the deficit.

Mr. Katchen responded yes, the actual surplus is \$413,316.00.

Mr. Katchen said the list of public employees is not complete as Diane Reh needs to be added and maybe Donna Brightman. He stated that the state is looking for employees with multiple jobs and if their hours are realistic.

Commissioner Weltman said this is harassment of public employees.

Mr. Katchen said there is also a health benefit schedule.

The commissioners thanked Mr. Katchen.

ROLL CALL:	Chen	Chudnick	Quaintance	Reh	Sedehi	Thomas	Weltman
AYES:	Chen	Chudnick	Quaintance	Reh	Sedehi	Thomas	Weltman
NAYS:	None						
Abstain:	None						
Absent:	None						

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

New Business - none

Second Public Comment

Juan Ratliff, family housing, 219 South Sixth Ave., stated that they say there are unmarked police cars around but he hasn't seen any. He stated that he had a meeting with Executive Director Brightman regarding Lauren Adams being rude.

Chairman Reh stated that she is not comfortable discussing staff publically and that he can talk to her privately.

Counsel Corrison stated that the Board cannot discuss personnel issues in public without notice.

Chairman Reh stated that she will be at a Martin Luther King celebration on the 19th at the Senior Center.

Housing Manager Sriwardena stated that she just received a text from Freeholder Jim Polos complimenting the way in which the HPHA handled its recent crisis.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Weltman and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adjourn at 8:00 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary