

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 13, 2016, the hour and date duly established for the holding of said meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Reh.

Housing Director Sriwardena read the 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 11, 2015, 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  
Raysa Martinez, Commissioner  
Donald Monk, Commissioner  
Diane Reh, Chairwoman  
Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner

Council Liaison:

Joshua Fine (7:10 PM)

Administration:

Donna Brightman, Executive Director  
Runi Sriwardena, Housing Director-HP  
Mike Yannuzzi, Maintenance Manager-WHA

Authority General Counsel:

Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

Accountant:

Bill Katchen

Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 9, 2015 was made by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chen.

ROLL CALL:           Chen Chudnick Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi  
AYES:                Chen Chudnick Monk Reh Sedehi  
NAYS:                None  
Abstain:             Martinez  
Absent:               None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Public Comment:

Juan Ratliff, 219 South Sixth Ave., stated that a tenant meeting was held today in the afternoon and wanted to know why they couldn't be in the evening so working people can attend.

Housing Manager Sriwardena replied that she will look into it.

Chairwoman Reh thanked Mr. Ratliff and said they would take his comments into consideration.

M.P. stated that Joe Thurston has been on jury duty and that Jeff Marder did a great job.

Chairwoman Reh stated that they will let them know.

Communications:

Chairwoman Reh noted that Lauren Adams received a Certificate in Tax Credit compliance and asked that the Executive Director give her the Board's congratulations.

Chairwoman Reh asked about HUD's approval of the significant amendment to the annual plan.

Executive Director Brightman explained that we have to submit an annual plan to HUD and the plan had to be amended to include the conditional award of the RAD program.

Executive Director Brightman's report:

Commissioner Sedehi asked about the designated housing plan for Samuel Kronman.

Executive Director Brightman stated that this idea came out of the RAD meeting with the Borough Council; specifically, the concern about the lack of Highland Park residents on the waiting list.

Executive Director Brightman further stated that statistics were being gathered to see if this was a possibility and it would be discussed at the strategic planning committee that will be appointed later this evening.

Commissioner Chen suggested that we do outreach to schools, churches and newsletters.

Commissioner Monk suggested the eligibility criteria be put on our website.

Commissioner Chudnick suggested Facebook.

Commissioner Martinez suggested a table at the Borough fair.

Executive Director Brightman stated that the criteria is supposed to go into the Borough's newsletter.

Commissioner Monk thanked Woodbridge for filling in for Joe Thurston while he was on jury duty.

Commissioner Sedehi inquired about the letter from Aparri Engineering and inquired as to what doors were being replaced.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it is the outside sliding glass doors to the balconies.

Executive Director Brightman brought up the new Borough hours and stated that the Authority normally follows their schedule. She further stated that she was not in favor of these hours nor was Ms. Sriwardena.

The Board members agreed that the Authority should maintain the hours of 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

#### RAD Update

Commissioner Monk spoke about the offer letter from PNC and that the entire letter should have been in the packet.

Executive Director Brightman stated that she is waiting for another offer and then would convene the RAD committee to discuss.

Commissioner Monk asked what would happen if we did not proceed with RAD, especially since we have hired A/E firms to spec the windows and roof.

Executive Director Brightman responded that we can spend up to \$100,000 on RAD expenses prior to conversion and that if RAD did not go forward we would proceed with a self-energy savings (ESCO) under public housing; therefore the specs would not be done in vain.

#### Attorney report

Counsel Corrison stated that he contacted the JIF and they do not have an issue with using a defibrillator in the building.

#### Accountant Report

Bill Katchen, accountant, said we will discuss the budget during the resolution portion of the meeting.

#### Staff Reports – no comment

Committee Reports – no comment

RESOLUTIONS

a) Reso #2016- 1 – Revised Annual Notice of Regular Meetings 2016

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Monk to adopt Resolution #2016-1.

ROLL CALL:           Chen Chudnick Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi  
AYES:                Chen Chudnick Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi  
NAYS:                None  
Abstain:             None  
Absent:               None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2016-2 - Resolution by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Highland Park to Amend the By-laws

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chen to adopt Resolution #2016-2.

Discussion

Commissioner Monk stated that he did not feel that the time of the meetings should be in the by-laws and that noting the time in the annual schedule of meetings was sufficient. Further, if the Board wanted to change the time it would not need a by-law amendment. He then asked Counsel Corrison if the time needed to be stated in the by-laws.

Counsel Corrison responded that the by-laws do not need that level of detail and that putting the time in the annual notice was sufficient. However, if you want to take out the time it would require another by-law amendment.

Commissioner Monk stated that we could do this next month.

Commissioner Chudnick felt that it was not necessary to revisit another amendment.

Chairwoman Reh asked for the roll call:

ROLL CALL:           Chen Chudnick Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi  
AYES:                Chen Chudnick Martinez Reh Sedehi  
NAYS:                Monk  
Abstain:             None  
Absent:               None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2016-3 – Establishing the Payment Standards for the HCV Program

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adopt Resolution #2016-3.

Discussion

Executive Director Brightman explained that this is done every year when the fair market rents change.

ROLL CALL:           Chen Chudnick Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi  
AYES:                Chen Chudnick Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi  
NAYS:                None  
Abstain:             None  
Absent:               None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

d) Reso #2016- 4 – Revision of Flat Rents

Motion moved by Commissioner Monk and seconded by Commissioner Martinez to adopt Resolution #2016-4.

Discussion

Commissioner Monk asked that the acronyms be spelled out.

Commissioner Sedehi asked what QHWRA is.

Counsel Corrison provided an explanation of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998.

ROLL CALL:           Chen Chudnick Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi  
AYES:                Chen Chudnick Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi  
NAYS:                None  
Abstain:             None  
Absent:               None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

e) Reso #2016-5 – Adopting Monthly Bill List for December 2015

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chen to adopt Resolution #2016-5.

Discussion

Chairwoman Reh asked why there were three checks to the child support center.

Counsel Corrison replied that there were three payrolls.

Commissioner Chen asked if the cable bill was paid twice or whether there were two payments.

ROLL CALL:           Chen Chudnick Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi  
AYES:                Chen Chudnick Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi

NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

f) Reso #2016-6 – Operating Budget Reso Approving the Budget for FY Beginning 4/1/16

Motion moved by Commissioner Chudnick and seconded by Commissioner Chen to adopt Resolution #2016-6.

### Discussion

Commissioner Monk stated that he feels that the budget is coming out of the blue and is being pushed upon the board, why the haste. He requested more time to review as adopting the budget is the commissioners' primary function. He asked that the budget be tabled.

Mr. Katchen stated that there is no time limit on the operating budget but the State via the NJ Local Fiscal Affairs Act requires that the budget be approved 60 days or earlier before the fiscal year ends (3/31.)

Mr. Katchen further stated that the budget is based on real figures and current costs such as salaries, insurance, etc. He went on to say that HUD has not yet established a formula for 2016 and that he based the budget on 2015 formulas, 84% for public housing and 75% for the housing voucher program.

He said that in the prior year the Board wanted the budget introduced in January as to avoid a late filing resolution. He also stated that the Board is being asked to introduce the budget, not adopt it, as that would be at the March meeting.

Commissioner Monk asked what would happen to this budget when we covert to RAD.

Mr. Katchen stated that a different budget would be required for RAD, one that will comply with the tax credits and what the investor would like to see. There would be a budget that the Authority does and one that the partnership does.

Mr. Katchen stated that budget adjustments could be made for the budget adoption in March.

Commissioner Chudnick asked if the budget was always introduced in January.

Mr. Katchen responded for the last five years.

Executive Director Brightman stated that there is not much room to adjust the budget as it is based on actual costs and is formula driven.

Councilman Fine asked about the PILOT.

Mr. Katchen said it was based on line 100 minus the utilities, 10% of the shelter rents minus utilities.

Commissioner Martinez said this is her first budget and it is overwhelming. It would be nice for new commissioners to receive a pre-budget orientation.

Commissioner Chudnick asked if she had taken her finance course yet.  
Commissioner Martinez stated that she has not.

Commissioner Monk stated that since we will now have committees they will be tasked with the review and recommendation to the full board.

ROLL CALL:	Chen Chudnick Martinez Monk Reh Sedehi
AYES:	Chen Chudnick Monk Reh Sedehi
NAYS:	None
Abstain:	Martinez
Absent:	None

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

g) Reso #2016-7 – Budget Reso for FY 4/1/16 to 3/31/17 (State)

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adopt Resolution #2016-7.

Mr. Katchen explained that the operating budget only includes the 124 public housing units and the state budget includes the 124 plus the Section 8 program. The budget projects a deficit of \$298.00 on public housing and a surplus of \$6,652.00 on the voucher program. The surplus is the voucher administration.

This budget is more informational due to the Transparency Act as we must include the information on any commissioners that receives funds from a government salary or pension.

Commissioner Monk stated that he felt his W2 included personal information and asked exactly what was required.

Mr. Katchen stated that just the wages – all other information can be blackened out.

Councilman Fine inquired as to whether the Board would put \$1,500 on the budget to purchase a defibrillator. They can cost anywhere from \$900 to \$1,500.

Chairwoman Reh asked how many would be purchased.

Councilman Fine answered, one.

Chairwoman Reh asked about getting one donated.

Councilman Fine stated that they are trying to get donations.

Chairwoman Reh asked if every department was budgeting \$1,500 for the purchase such as police, fire, etc.

Councilman Fine responded that the Borough is not at that point in the budget process.

Chairwoman Reh asked who would train people on how to use it.

Councilman Fine said users are protected by the Good Samaritan Act and that Ari Lewitter can do the training.

Chairwoman Reh asked Mr. Katchen if this was unusual.

Mr. Katchen stated that purchasing a defibrillator could be put in now or at adoption.

Councilman Fine asked if the Board would do it.

Chairwoman Reh asked if he needed something formal. She suggested we wait a bit to see if we get a donation before budgeting the item.

Commissioner Martinez asked Mr. Katchen about page C4 as it's not filled out.

Mr. Katchen stated that it's done after submission.

Commissioners Reh and Morgan noted that the Authority's web address was not correct.

ROLL CALL:	Chen	Chudnick	Martinez	Monk	Reh	Sedehi
AYES:	Chen	Chudnick	Martinez	Monk	Reh	Sedehi
NAYS:	None					
Abstain:	None					
Absent:	None					

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

h) Reso #2016-8 – Resolution to Establish Ad Hoc Committees

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chen to adopt Resolution #2016-8.

ROLL CALL:	Chen	Chudnick	Martinez	Monk	Reh	Sedehi
AYES:	Chen	Chudnick	Martinez	Monk	Reh	Sedehi
NAYS:	None					
Abstain:	None					
Absent:	None					

Commissioner Sedehi stated that she was happy to see these committees.

Chairwoman Reh thanked Commissioner Monk.

Commissioner Martinez said she thinks these are a good idea.

Commissioner Monk asked how many members can be on a committee.

Counsel Corrison stated that it would be less than a majority.

Executive Director Brightman stated that it would be three commissioners.

Chairwoman Reh asked if this rule pertained to email communications.

Counsel Corrison stated that all decisions and processes need to be done here (in public) to effect an outcome.



## Old Business

Executive Director Brightman stated that these three resolutions were from the prior meeting with the corrections and ratings.

## New Business

Maintenance Manager Yannuzzi asked Councilman Fine if the Borough could assist with special pick-ups of furniture and debris.

Councilman Fine asked that Mr. Yannuzzi send him an email.

Executive Director Brightman asked Councilman Fine if a new commissioner was appointed.

Councilman Fine said, yes, it is Matthew Hirsh.

Executive Director Brightman asked if there was any follow-up in putting the application criteria in the Borough newsletter.

Councilman Fine stated that it will be in the next E News.

Executive Director Brightman asked if he was reappointed as the Authority's liaison.

Councilman Fine answered that he was.

Chairwoman Reh asked Councilman Fine to inform the social workers of the application criteria.

## Second Public Comment

Karin Jackson, 3P, stated that she would be glad to take information to the senior center.

Chairwoman Reh thanked her.

Dee Donnelly, 1H, asked if her rent will be increased under RAD

Executive Director Brightman stated that tenants will pay 30% of their income for rent.

Tom Nolan, 3H, asked if his rent will be increased with the new flat rents.

Executive Director Brightman stated that he should discuss this with Housing Manager Sriwardena.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner Monk and seconded by Commissioner Martinez to adjourn at 8:00 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

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Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary