

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 22, 2020, the hour and date duly established for the holding of said meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Martinez.

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 April 16, 2019, 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.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

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

PRESENT

Commissioners:

Regis Methven, Commissioner
Steve Chudnick, Commissioner
Diane Reh, Commissioner
Raysa Martinez, Chair
William Rainwater, Commissioner
Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner

Council Liaison:

Stephany Kim Chohan

Administration:

Donna Brightman, Executive Director
Runi Sriwardena, Housing Director
Mike Yannuzzi, Maintenance Mgr. WHA
William Katchen, Staff Accountant

ABSENT

Commissioners:

Ruby Hope, Commissioner

Authority General Counsel:

Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin & Breslin

Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 12, 2019 was made by Commissioner Rainwater and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi.

ROLL CALL: Chudnick Hope Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
AYES: Chudnick Martinez Methven Rainwater Sedehi
NAYS: None
Abstain: Reh
Absent: Hope

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Commissioner Reh introduced Stephany Kim Chohan, the recently appointed council liaison to the Highland Park Housing Authority.

Public Comment I:

Richard Knaur – 2M stated that he has been a resident for one year and is happy to live here as it is a well-run building. He has one complaint as he resides on the second floor in back by the gazebo. He stated that there is a lot of smokers and he has to keep his windows shut, because he doesn't want the smoke in his apartment. In the summer, the air conditioner filters the smoke, but in the winter, the heating unit draws the smoke into the apartment. He distributed an article to the Commissioners that stated smokers must be 25 feet from federal property in order to smoke, and noted that the HUD policy was not being adhered to.

Chairwoman Martinez stated that she will have the attorney look into the matter. She further stated that perhaps this topic should be discussed at the next tenant meeting.

Dee Donnelly – 1_ stated that she agrees with Richard and commented that the gazebo should never have been put in its present location.

Karen _____ - 3P stated that she is not a smoker, but smokers have rights too.

Joanne Rogers – 1C stated that the way she interprets the article; it is 25 feet from a federal building, not the grounds. She stated that the designated smoking area is more than 25 feet from the building. She went on to say that she never heard any complaints about the smoke, only about the smell of garbage. She stated that people should get off their backs for smoking as we can also nit pick about things you do.

Debbie _____ - 6F stated that the gazebo seems to be 25 feet from the grounds, however as it is the designated smoking area, perhaps people should not smoke outside of the gazebo, as she would not want to smell smoke if she did not smoke. She stated that some tenants do have the right to smoke.

_____ -1J stated that she lives on the first floor in the front of the building and people walk by her unit smoking. She went on to say that the authority just spent a lot of money on the bathrooms, but not on the first floor. She asked if there were plans to do these bathrooms with RAD money.

Executive Director responded that the RAD money has been spent and there are no plans to do any additional first floor bathrooms at this time; maybe in the future.

The tenant from 1J stated that her bathroom has a leak.

Housing Director Sriwardenia stated that it will be addressed.

Richard Knaur – 2M stated that the article about smoking is clear that it is 25 feet from the property line and “I want to be able to open my windows”.

Chairwoman Martinez again stated that she will refer the matter to the HPHA attorney.

_____ -1E stated that she loves living here.

New Business: Commissioner Methven stated that he is not comfortable with the _____ day the snow removal due to _____ issues. Commissioner Reh stated that this should be discussed in a _____ another meeting.

Communications: Chairwoman Martinez stated that she requested a RAD summary which the Executive Director Brightman wrote and Commissioner Sedehi summarized. Commissioner Sedehi stated that she thought it should go on the website and that it might be helpful for new members. Commissioner Rainwater asked if the trustees of Kronman GP could be included and Commissioner Sedehi stated she will do so.

Attorney’s Report: Executive Director Brightman stated that since this was a rescheduled meeting, Mr. Corrison could not attend. However, he did go to court today on a tenant matter.

Accountant’s Report: Chairwoman Martinez stated that Mr. Katchen will give input when the budget resolutions are considered.

Executive Director’s Report:

Commissioner Rainwater inquired about the _____ and hot water. Executive Director Brightman explained that a mother board burnt out in one of the hot water tanks and had to be ordered. It was during the holidays, so the part took a good ten days to arrive. Meanwhile, one tank was servicing the entire building, leaving water warm not hot. Joe exchanged water heater parts and was able to increase the water temperature, but the system tripped off periodically and had to be monitored every couple of hours, but the water was hot.

As the BOC may recall, it was discovered that the bathroom vents were never hooked up in this building. Part of the RAD money went to repair this problem. Upon a final test, it was discovered that one section was still not working. It was repaired and now all of the vents are working.

Commissioner Chudnick inquired about the rooftop antenna. Executive Director Brightman stated that the Kronman GP trustees are interested to see if any providers are interested in renting our rooftop in order to earn additional money and perhaps supply better cell service.

Commissioner Methven commented that maybe something can be done with the TV antenna while they are up there.

Chairwoman Martinez welcomed Runi back and expressed the BOC condolences on the loss of her brother.

Staff Reports: None

Committee reports: None

RESOLUTIONS

a) Reso #2020-01 – Adopting Monthly Bill List for December 2019

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Reh to adopt Resolution #2020-01.

Discussion

Commissioner Rainwater asked if the Pilot was for one year or two. Executive Director responded it was for one year.

ROLL CALL: Chudnick Hope Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
AYES: Chudnick Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Hope

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2020-02 – Approve Change order #6 for Santorini Construction

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Reh to adopt Resolution #2020-02.

Discussion

The BOC request the word orders be made order in the title.

Commissioner Rainwater asked what this change order was for. Executive Director Brightman responded that it was for mechanical units and work item credits.

ROLL CALL: Chudnick Hope Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
AYES: Chudnick Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Hope

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2020-03 – Reso to Approve Change Order #7 for Santorini Construction.

Motion moved by Commissioner Methven and seconded by Commissioner Sedehi to adopt Resolution #2020-03.

Discussion

Chair Martinez asked about approvals. Executive Director Brightman stated that the change orders were approved by the A/E and NJHMFA.

BOC also requested that orders be changed to order in the title.

ROLL CALL: Chudnick Hope Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
AYES: Chudnick Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Hope

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

d.) Reso #2020-04 Appointing Donna Brightman as Human Resource Officer

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Rainwater to adopt Resolution # 2020-04

Discussion

Commissioner Sedehi asked if employees received this. Executive Director responded that they had not as yet, that it needed to be adopted prior to distribution. She further stated that this is a State requirement.

ROLL CALL: Chudnick Hope Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
AYES: Chudnick Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Hope

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

e.) Reso #2020-05 Introducing State Budget

Motion moved by Commissioner Rainwater and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adopt Resolution #2020-05

Discussion

Change the name Monk to Hope under Roll Call.

William Katchen stated that this is a different budget than in the past as Kronman is carved out.

He directed the BOC's attention to F-2:

The revenue from Park Terrace is \$285,178. \$2,300,000 from the voucher program, which is an increase of \$850,000 due to the RAD conversion to PBV. Kronman share of the salaries and benefits for staff is \$172,460 bringing the total revenue to \$2,757,638.

Page F-1 projects the anticipated surplus.

Page F-4 delineates the cost of staff and benefits and Kronman's prorated share of costs.

Page F-8 notes the authority's pension liability \$423,638 and the anticipated surplus. \$8,746 for Park Terrace and \$24,168 for the voucher program.

Council Liaison Kim Chohan asked if these budgets are sent to the State to which Mr. Katchen replied yes. Ms. Kim Chohan then asked if they require a minimum surplus, to which Mr. Katchen replied no, but that if you show a negative, you must provide an explanation.

Commissioner Rainwater commented that the Park Terrace surplus is what it is due to the loan interest rate. We asked to refinance, but NJCPC stated they cannot do that. Mr. Katchen suggested we pay down the loan as fast as possible.

Executive Director Brightman reminded the BOC that although the surplus projected is \$8,746, there is still a reserve of \$250,000.

Commissioner Rainwater asked if the voucher amounts are known. Mr. Katchen responded that we know the RAD portion as this is set and projected 99 to 100% voucher funding as that is what the HUD budget is projecting. Congress has increased the voucher allocations for the 2 to 3 years.

Chairwoman Martinez asked Mr. Katchen for an overall comment about the budget to which he stated, as of January 1st Kronman will receive the full RAD rent and the rents under RAD are more than you would have received if you remained public housing. The voucher program is healthy because of the increased administrative fees due to PBV.

Executive Director added that Kronman is healthy, the voucher program is healthy, but Park is nominal due to the loan and we will have to discuss this with the Kronman trustees.

ROLL CALL:	Chudnick Hope Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
AYES:	Chudnick Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
NAYS:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Hope

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

f.) Reso #2020-06 Approving the Operating Budget

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Chudnick to adopt Resolution #2020-06

Discussion

Change the name Monk to Hope under Roll Call.

William Katchen directed the commissioners to the schedule of positions and salaries page. He explained how employee's salaries and benefits were divided according to the time spent in each of the three areas – Park, Kronman, Voucher program.

ROLL CALL:	Chudnick Hope Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
AYES:	Chudnick Martinez Methven Rainwater Reh Sedehi
NAYS:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Hope

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Old Business: none

Public Comment II

Joanne Rogers – 1C asked if the rooftop antenna was approved.

Commissioner Rainwater responded that at this time it is only an idea under consideration.

Karen Jackson – 3P asked if the tenants can hang pictures in the hallways.

Commissioner Sedehi stated that it can be discussed at the next tenant's meeting.

Angela Perrone - 1J stated that the TV remotes do not work.

Jay _____ - 1E stated that she appreciates that the BOC is looking into antennas as she gets terrible cell phone service.

Commissioner Methven stated that ever since he moved into Kronman, he has only one bar on his phone.

Angela Perrone – 1J stated that a cell phone booster costs \$264.

Commissioner Rainwater said he has terrible service as well but service is better enabled by wifi.

Debbie _____ - 6_ stated that Executive Director Brightman made some comments about the hot water, but it was a big deal, especially since the construction was finally ending and it was during the holidays. She stated that she saw Joe checking the hot water, but Jeff did not.

Commissioner Methven commented that what happened with the hot water mother board was a fluke and there was no way to prevent it or get the part here any faster.

Angela Perrone – 1J was speaking out of turn and was ruled out of order.

Commissioner Reh suggested that when issues like this arise, it might be a good idea to review the situation to see if anything could have been done better.

Hope _____ - ___ asked if we would install blinds on the community room windows as people walking by can see in and it makes her uncomfortable.

Chairwoman Martinez said that her request will be considered.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Reh to adjourn at 7:50 PM.

All commissioners present voted in favor.

Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary