

# 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 for a Rescheduled Session on July 20, 2023 at 6:00 PM via zoom as follows:

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Meeting ID: 850 692 9169

Passcode: 362007

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The meeting was called to order by Housing Director Sriwardena at 6:00 PM.

Housing Director Sriwardena read the Notice of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act P.L. 1975, C.231 which provided that adequate 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 July 17, 2023 a copy of the notice of this meeting setting forth the date, time and location of this regular meeting was posted on the Highland Park website and Housing Authority's official designated bulletin board located at 242 South Sixth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ, and sent to Borough Hall for posting. It was also emailed to the Home News Tribune and Star Ledger.

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

## PRESENT

Commissioners:

Ruby Hope, Commissioner  
Raysa Martinez, Commissioner  
William Malloy, Commissioner  
William Rainwater, Chair  
Evelvn Sedehi. Commissioner

Authority General Counsel :  
Terrence Corriston, Esq., Breslin &  
Breslin

Administration:

Donna Brightman, Executive Director  
Runi Sriwardena, Housing Director

## ABSENT

Commissioners:

Gail Chonoles, Commissioner

Council Liaison:  
Tara Canavera

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular scheduled meeting held on June 8, 2023 was made by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Malloy and upon roll call the vote was as follows:

ROLL CALL: Chonoles Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
AYES: Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Chonoles

The resolution portion of the meeting was moved up as Commissioner Hope had limited time available.

Resolutions:

a) Reso #2023-22 – Adopting Monthly Bill List for June 2023

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Hope to adopt Resolution #2023-22.

ROLL CALL: Chonoles Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
AYES: Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Chonoles

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

b) Reso #2023-23 – Authorizing the Executive Director to Pay the Monthly Invoices for July/August 2023

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Hope to adopt Resolution #2023-23.

ROLL CALL: Chonoles Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
AYES: Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Chonoles

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

c) Reso #2023-24 – 2023 Adopted Budget Reso

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Hope to adopt Resolution #2023-24.

Discussion

Executive Director Brightman explained that the Board introduced the budget and it was sent to the State for approval. The State approved the budget; therefore, now it's back to the Board to adopt the budget. You will all need to sign that you voted on it.

ROLL CALL: Chonoles Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
AYES: Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Chonoles

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

d) Reso #2023-25 – Subscribing to a Solar Landscape Community Solar Project

Motion moved by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Hope to adopt Resolution #2023-25.

Discussion

Commissioner Rainwater had some concerns.

Executive Director Brightman explained that the State through the Board of Public Utilities went out for bids for entities that would build solar fields and then sell it back to benefit low-and-moderate subscribers. There was only one bid in our area, Solar Landscaping. She stated that Woodbridge was accepted into the program and she applied to have the HPHA accepted but there has been no decision as of now.

Commissioner Rainwater asked if we had to commit to informing other low-income residents.

Executive Director Brightman responded that this is only for Kronman but if they expand the program why would we not include Park Terrace and Section 8. The tenants would get the rebate, not the Authority.

Commissioner Rainwater asked what we would spend the Kronman rebate on.

Executive Director Brightman stated that at first, we have to see if we actually do get a rebate and it has to be spent on something that benefits the tenants directly.

Commissioner Martinez stated that commissioners are always noting how high our energy bills are and why would we not do this?

ROLL CALL: Chonoles Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
AYES: Hope Malloy Martinez Rainwater Sedehi  
NAYS: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Chonoles

The Chair thereupon declared said motion approved.

Public Comment: none

New Business:

Commissioner Rainwater stated that he was going to resign as Chair and we would need to elect a Chair at the September meeting.

Executive Director Brightman reported that Ruby Hope was appointed to the Board of Commissioners.

Communications:

Executive Director Brightman stated that PNC is reviewing the 4<sup>th</sup> stabilization payment.

Attorney's Report:

Counsel Corrison reported that before the Park Terrace garnishment becomes effective regarding the tenant who left owing \$26,000, we needed to send a questionnaire which asks for her employment and banking information. It has been sent and if she does not respond, the court will require her to do so.

Commissioner Hope asked what if she quits her job.

Counsel Corrison stated that it's only an issue if she leaves the state of NJ. He also said that certain sources of money (pension) may be exempt from garnishments. He has to check the law.

Accountant's Report: none

Executive Director Brightman's report:

Executive Director Brightman reported that she investigated the Solar Landscaping program. The transfer from the WHA to Edison is slow as we are having difficulty finding a replacement for Housing Director Sriwardena. She reported that the balcony repairs are out to bid.

Staff Reports:

Housing Director Sriwardena's report – Commissioner Rainwater thanked Commissioner Sedehi for bringing food to the tenants.

Committee reports: none

Old Business:

Executive Director Brightman reported that the mayor's office had contacted Gail Chonoles and she said she was willing to serve and was supposed to get sworn in and attend tonight's meeting.

The commissioners expressed concern that she was appointed in September of 2022 and has not attended any meetings.

Executive Director Brightman added that she would have to complete all of her Rutgers' courses in the fall in order to be in compliance.

Commissioners Rainwater and Hope stated that they would contact the mayor to discuss the situation.

Public Comment II: none

Comments: none

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner Malloy to adjourn at 6:35 PM. All commissioners present voted in favor.

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Donna Brightman, Exec. Director/Secretary