

HIGHLAND PARK HOUSING AUTHORITY

BOARD MEETING

Thursday, February 8, 2024

6:30 PM

**MINUTES**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Highland Park Housing Authority was held in the conference room at the Highland Park Housing Authority. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Please note that adequate notice of this meeting, as required by the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975, has been provided by adequate notice. A copy of the meeting notice was provided on November 1, 2023, and posted on the Highland Park Housing Authority website and Housing Authority’s official designated bulletin board located at 242 South Sixth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ and sent to the Borough Hall of Highland Park for posting and submitted to the Homes News Tribune and Star-Ledger.

**Roll Call**

**In attendance:** Chairwoman Ruby Hope, Commissioner David Copperman, Commissioner Raysa Martinez, Commissioner Padriac Millet, Commissioner William Rainwater, Deborah Hurley, Executive Director, Terrence Corriston, Esq., Counsel via-zoom, Borough of Highland Park, Council Liaison, Matthew Hersh, and Denise Blake, Highland Park Housing Authority, Housing Director.

**Absent:** Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi

Motion to approve the minutes of January 11, 2024

**Motion:** Commissioner William Rainwater

**Second:** Commissioner Raysa Matinez

**Discussions:** Commissioner Copperman expressed clarification regarding the term used pertaining to the website update, as there is a need to address regulatory content on the website versus the need for improvement. Chairwoman Hope added that she understands and knows that Deborah Hurley, Exec. Dir. is just onboarding and has intentions to address and include our counsel. In addition, the Open Meetings Act notice of April 2023 should be addressed, as the date should be corrected. Deborah Hurley, Executive Director agreed that she would research the correct date for the board and continue to coordinate website regulatory content. There was no further discussion.

	<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Chairwoman Ruby Hope	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Raysa Martinez	X			
Commissioner Padriac Millet			X	
Commissioner William Rainwater	X			
Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi			X	

**Public Comment**

3P: Expressed appreciation for keeping the floors clean in the building. In addition, wanted to enlist the support from residents to do their part in helping to keep the laundry area clean after it has been used.

3B: Mentioned that the Resident Directory for the doorbell needs to be updated and some of the buttons are not working properly or at all. Denise Blake, Housing Director, addressed the issue and will be working to make improvements.

**New Business:**

Commissioner David Copperman expressed that the website Section 8 links seem to not work properly.

**Communications:**

There was no discussion.

**Attorney's Report:**

Terrence Corrison, Esq., Board Counsel reported that there was progress made with collections as there is a hearing scheduled for February 27, 2024. More information will be provided at the next board meeting.

**Staff Reports:**

Chairwoman Ruby Hope expressed appreciation for the support provided by the housing authority's team which is reflected in the reports that were submitted to the board.

**Executive Director's Report:**

-Meeting was had with the mayor's office that included the Business Administrator and Councilman Hersh. We addressed vacant board seats, continued support from Highland Park Borough with snow removal assistance, and coordination of the dumpsters. Commissioner Copperman wanted to know the status of the dumpsters. Exec. Dir., Deborah Hurley mentioned that our Housing Dir. and Dept. of Works Dir. needed to coordinate and secure the specs which have been done. We just need to start the process of purchasing the dumpsters.

-Exec. Dir., Deborah Hurley has been working closely with Tony Polcari to complete the findings pertaining to finalizing the budget. Commissioner Copperman wanted to know if errors were corrected that were identified at the last meeting. Exec. Director, Deborah Hurley, said that board notes and DCA's comments were all addressed in order to present the board with a clean budget to adopt this evening.

-Commissioner Rainwater wanted to know the status of the voucher program. Exec. Dir., Deborah Hurley mentioned that the under utilization of vouchers remains to be addressed. Once the budget is passed, we can focus on the voucher program. However, there are several ways to address the voucher underutilization issue and it will require some time to roll out a plan. The first step was to open the waiting list, which had been done. Now, we need to work within our budget and issue vouchers. Commissioner Martinez was wondering what contributed to the underutilization. Exec. Dir., Deborah Hurley expressed that other housing authorities are experiencing the same issue as the rents are high and families are having a difficult time finding available apartments that are affordable.

-Auditor-RFP will be issued in the next couple of weeks, as it will be time to engage the auditor to conduct our 2024 audit.

-Commissioner Copperman inquired about the status of the collection and dumping of the trash and has the situation been resolved. Denis Blake, Housing Director, and Director of Maintenance mentioned that it has been addressed. However, there continues to be reoccurring issues that pertain to the Borough's schedule, etc. The HP Team will continue to monitor and will provide the Executive Director with an update to share with the mayor's office.

**Committee Reports:** Chairwoman Hope reviewed and assigned board members to committees. The following were established and will meet when necessary:

**Personnel Committee:**

- Commissioner Ruby Hope
- Commissioner Raysa Martinez
- Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi

**Tenant Relations/Policy/Building & Grounds Committee:**

- Commissioner David Copperman
- Commissioner Raysa Martinez
- Commissioner Padriac Millet

**Finance Committee**

- Commissioner David Copperman
- Commissioner Padriac Millet
- Commissioner William Rainwater

Commissioner David Copperman inquired about the two boards that are not found on the website. Chairwoman Hope provided background on the Highland Park Affordable Housing Board and the Kroman Board. It was suggested by the chairwoman that board packets of the meetings be provided at the HP Housing Authority meetings. Exec. Director, Deborah Hurley mentioned that the packets from the two board meetings have been provided to the board that evening.

**Resolutions:**

**2024-4 Resolution** to approve the monthly bill list for the month of January 2024 in the amount of \$29,559.87.

**Discussion:** Chairwoman Hope opened the floor for discussion. There was no comment.

**Motion:** Commissioner William Rainwater

**Seconded:** Commissioner David Cooperman

	<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Chairwoman Ruby Hope	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Raysa Martinez	X			
Commissioner Padriac Millet	X			
Commissioner William Rainwater	X			
Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi			X	

**2024-5 Resolution** by the Commissioners of the Borough of Highland Park Housing Authority to adopt the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget.

**Moved:** Commissioner Raysa Martinez  
**Seconded:** Commissioner Padriac Millet

**Discussion:** Chairwoman Ruby Hope asked if there were any questions. Commissioner Martinez inquired if the zero total for Capital Appropriations is a result of the RAD Conversion. Executive Director, Deborah Hurley confirmed that Commissioner Martinez is accurate. Once a housing authority converts to RAD, Capital Funds are no longer provided by HUD. There was no further discussion.

	<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Chairwoman Ruby Hope	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Raysa Martinez	X			
Commissioner Padriac Millet	X			
Commissioner William Rainwater	X			
Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi			X	

**2024-6 Resolution Approving the Election of Evelyn Sedehi as Vice Chairperson of the Highland Park Housing Authority.**

**Motion:** Commissioner William Rainwater  
**Seconded:** Commissioner Padriac Millet

**Discussion:** Chairwoman Hope indicated that Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi agreed to be the Vice Chair until the board reorganization in April 2024. There was no further discussion.

	<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Chairwoman Ruby Hope	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Raysa Martinez	X			
Commissioner Padriac Millet	X			
Commissioner William Rainwater	X			
Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi			X	

**Old Business:**

Chairwoman Hope asked Executive Director, Deborah Hurley to provide an update on the balcony repairs. Executive Director Deborah Hurley mentioned that she has been in touch with the engineer to confirm a start date with the contractors. Denise Blake, Housing Director, was able to expand and mentioned that scanning of the balconies would begin within a week.

**Public Comment for Other Matters:**

**Apt. 219:** Presented concern about the loud music which continues to be played loudly during the day and evening. Denise Blake, Housing Director provided a response that detailed how she can work with resident(s) to assist in resolving the issue with documentation that she can then present to the police department for additional support.

Chairwoman Ruby Hope closed the Public Meeting at 7:14 pm

**Motion to adjourn:** Commissioner William Rainwater  
**Seconded:** Commissioner Raysa Martinez

All commissioners present voted to adjourn at 7:15 pm

  
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Deborah M. Hurley, Secretary