

**HIGHLAND PARK HOUSING AUTHORITY  
BOARD MEETING**

April 11, 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 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 Home News Tribune and Star-Ledger.

**Roll Call**

**In attendance:** Chair Ruby Hope, Vice Chair, Evelyn Sedehi, Commissioner David Copperman, Commissioner Raysa Martinez, Commissioner Padriac Millet, Deborah Hurley, Executive Director, Borough of Highland Park, Council Liaison, Matthew Hersh, and Denise Blake, Highland Park Housing Authority, Housing Director, Terrance Corriston, Esq., Counsel.

**Absent:** Commissioner William Rainwater

**Board Reorganization:**

**MOTION TO DESIGNATE COUNSEL TO BE TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON FOR THE REORGANIZATION** Motion to designate counsel to be temporary chairperson for the reorganization moved by Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi and seconded by Commissioner David Copperman .

<u>Member Recorded Vote</u>	<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Chairperson Ruby Hope	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Raysa Martinez	X			
Commissioner Padraic Millet	X			
Commissioner William Rainwater				X
Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi	X			

**6. NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIRPERSON :**

Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi nominated Commissioner Ruby Hope for Chair.

Commissioner Raysa Martinez seconded the nomination.

7. MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIRPERSON Motion to close nominations for chairperson moved by Commissioner Padriac Millet and seconded by Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi.

<u>Member Recorded Vote</u>	<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Chairperson Ruby Hope	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Raysa Martinez	X			
Commissioner Padraic Millet	X			
Commissioner William Rainwater				X
Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi	X			

8. ROLL CALL VOTE TO ELECT CHAIRPERSON

<u>Member Recorded Vote</u>	<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Chairperson Ruby Hope	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Raysa Martinez	X			
Commissioner Padraic Millet	X			
Commissioner William Rainwater				X
Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi	X			

9. COUNSEL RETURNS CHAIR TO CHAIRPERSON

10. CHAIRPERSON CALLS FOR NOMINATIONS FOR VICE-CHAIRPERSON :

Chair Ruby Hope nominated Commissioner Raysa Martinez for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi seconded the nomination.

11. MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS FOR VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Motion to close nominations for Vice Chairperson moved by Commissioner Padraic Millet and seconded by Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi.

<u>Member Recorded Vote</u>	<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Chairperson Ruby Hope	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Raysa Martinez	X			
Commissioner Padraic Millet	X			
Commissioner William Rainwater				X
Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi	X			

12. ROLL CALL VOTE TO ELECT VICE-CHAIRPERSON

<u>Member Recorded Vote</u>	<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Chairperson Ruby Hope	X			
Commissioner David Copperman	X			
Commissioner Raysa Martinez	X			
Commissioner Padraic Millet	X			
Commissioner William Rainwater				X
Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi	X			

**Continuation of Regular Board Meeting:**

Motion to approve the Minutes of April 11, 2024

**Motion:** Commissioner Sedehi

**Second:** Commissioner Millet

**Discussions:** Commissioner Sedehi inquired about the follow up with Officer Fitzgerald. Caseworker Kettly Gilles mentioned that they have connected and will be scheduling a program with residents. In addition, Commissioner Sedehi inquired about the multiple listing for affordable housing line item and what was the status regarding the designation for landline. Deborah Hurley, Executive Director and Sarayu Sammara, Administrative Personnel Manager, EHA/HPHA indicated that there were several bills still outstanding from end of year that need to be paid, and which fall under that category. Counsel Terrance Corrison, Esq., indicated that he would speak to the Executive Director to decide best way to proceed. Commissioner Copperman inquired about the two-year tool. Executive Director, Deborah Hurley presented an overview of the two-year tool and how it benefits the Section 8 Department. There was no further discussion. Commissioner Copperman requested if the board could receive a staff schedule and business milestone schedule. Chair Ruby Hope provided an explanation for why such schedules would not be made a priority at this time. There was no further discussion.

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

**Public Comment**

No public comment.

**New Business:** Council Liaison, Matthew Hersh mentioned that the Borough of Highland Park will be hosting a 5K & Street Fair on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm and “Sustainable Highland Park” will take place on the same day rain or shine.

**Communications:**

There was no discussion.

**Attorney’s Report:** Terrence Corrison, Esq. mentioned that all housing authorities were notified that state law now requires that residents be informed of the flood zone status of their location. This allows tenants to make a decision to sign up for flood insurance, if they desire. Also, the sheriff’s office has been contacted regarding the collection of payments.

**Staff Reports:**

**Housing Director:** Denise Blake reported that she has completed (70) tax-credits for residents, which were completed on time. The next phase of resident tax-credits will begin soon. Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi asked if she had previous experience with tax-credits. Denis Blake indicated that she has tax-credit background.

**Case Worker:** Kettly Gilles mentioned that aside from her casework, she has begun to focus on programming for the families. A calendar of events can be found in your packet.

**Section 8:** Marissa Campbell mentioned that two briefing sessions were conducted, and another will be scheduled soon. The two-year training will begin soon and the lease ups have increased.

**Executive Director’s Report:** There was nothing to report since the board recently had a special meeting.

**Committee Reports:** Chair Ruby Hope mentioned that committee discussion would be tabled for the following month and that normal practice is that committees meet when necessary to address matters related to the committee. Vice Chair Raysa Martinez requested that the board receive a copy of the committees with board assignments. Chair Ruby Hope mentioned that a committee list will be provided by the next meeting.

**Resolutions:**

**2024- 11 Resolution by the Commissioners of the Borough of Highland Park Housing Authority to approve bill list for the month of March, 2024 in the amount of \$18,995.98.**

**Moved:** Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi

**Seconded:** Vice Chair Raysa Martinez

**Discussion:** There was no discussion.

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

**2024-12 Resolution by the Commissioners of the Highland Park Housing Authority authorizing the approval of the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Caldwell and Gregory for Laundry Room Services.**

**Motion:** Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi  
**Seconded:** Vice Chair Raysa Martinez

**Discussion:** Deborah Hurley, Executive Director presented an overview of the process to secure the vendor. Caldwell and Gregory provided the lowest price for service and are local. The service will be for 5 years and we will receive 70% of the fee. Terrence Corriston, Esq., made two mentions that should be noted in the file and staff calendars. Note should be made regarding the time to notify us if we plan to renew or it will automatically renew. Second note is that someone should be on the premises when the service comes to collect the funds to ensure HPHA is receiving the correct amount from the service. Vice Chair Raysa Martinez identified that a correction should be made about the number of washer and dryers we are to receive, and the contract should spell out the service provided that includes the mobile app and cash payment, etc. Denise Blake, Housing Director and Deborah Hurley, Exec. Director mentioned that the contract would be updated to reflect corrections recommended by the Vice Chair. There was no further discussion.

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

**2024-13 Resolution by the Commissioners of the Highland Park Housing Authority authorizing the Executive Director to execute a contract with Giampaolo & Associates for auditing services for the Period Beginning April 1, 2024 at an annual fee of \$9, 870.00.**

**Motion:** Commissioner Padriac Millet  
**Seconded:** Commissioner David Copperman

**Discussion:** There was no discussion.

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

**Old Business:**

- Balcony repairs continued update: Chair Hope expressed that work remains on schedule for painting of the (6) units.
- Dumpster purchase update: Chair Hope, Denise Blake, Housing Director mentioned that the dumpsters are scheduled for delivery in May. Commissioner Copperman indicated that he would

like to visit the dumpsters once they are in place. In addition, he questioned the occupancy rate for Park Terrace. Counsel, Terrance Corrison, Esq., provided an overview and indicated that 96% occupancy rate by HUD's standards is good.

- Commissioner Copperman inquired about the status of the resident commissioner. The Executive Director mentioned that the matter is still being discussed with the mayor's office.

**Public Comment for Other Matters:**

**Unit 5F:** Inquired about the size of the new washing machines and dryers and what will be the process, if there is still credit on the old cards? Executive Director, Deborah Hurley was able to provide the size based on the information that Denise Blake, Housing Director, provided. However, residents may visit the office to receive more specifics about the machines. Regarding the cards that still have money remaining, Denise Blake, Housing Director, and Chair Hope assured residents that the new company will ensure that the funds will be able to be transferred onto the new card or accommodations will be made to address the matter.


**Unit 1J:** Inquired about the possibility of having the caseworker extend her days to five days a week if funds were available to support the request.

**3F:** Wanted to know would the landscape be corrected where there is extensive damage from the work performed by the contractors that repaired the balcony. Denise Blake, Housing Director, assured residents that the landscaping will be addressed upon completion.

Chair Ruby Hope closed the Public Meeting at 7:17 pm

**Motion to adjourn:** Commissioner Evelyn Sedehi  
**Seconded:** Vice Chair Raysa Martinez

All commissioners present voted to adjourn at 7:18 pm

  
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Deborah M. Hurley, Secretary