

**Newark Housing Authority**  
**Board of Commissioners**  
**August 14, 2019**  
Revised 9/4/2019

**Summary of Meeting Minutes**

**Opening:**

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by the Board Chairperson, Lloyd Harris.

**I. Roll Call:**

Board of Commissioners present: Lloyd Harris, Nikki Lane, Marguerite Ashley, Dr. Lewis and Emile Brown. Marene Jordan; Executive Director and Donald Gouge Jr. NHA's attorney were also present.

Absent: Donna Shand.

Note: NHA has one board vacancy

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

**(a). Meeting Minutes from June 12, 2019**

The Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mrs. Lane made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Ashley.

Aye 3 (Mrs. Lane, Ms. Ashley and Mr. Brown)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 3 to 0  
Abstain: Dr. Lewis (newly appointed)

**III. Report of the Executive Director:**

**(a). Staff Reports:**

The Chairperson asked for the report of the Executive Director for the months of June and July. Mrs. Jordan provided the following report:

**Rental Needs Assessment; Specifically the Non-Student and Affordable Housing Subcommittee:**

Mrs. Jordan commented that as a member of this subcommittee how there were concerns of whether or not the recommendations suggested by this committee, relating to affordable housing for "NHA housing participants", will be supported and accepted by Mayor and Council. The concern was for the lack of vision for inclusionary housing that (if supported) would bring diversity to the housing community regardless of race or income.

She spoke about how NHA handles funds in administering rental assistance under the voucher program. She also talked about the perceived stringent Housing Quality Standards that apply to landlords in maintaining their rental unit through-out the tenancy of a program participant to continue to receive the

assistance. She mentioned how Housing Authorities (annually) are faced with the possibility of budget cuts. The funding concerns mentioned during the Rental Needs Assessment meetings should not be a public concern. Housing Authorities provide rental assistance within their budget unless unforeseen issues occur that may require other action. However, the budgets available are monitored to determine the longevity of the funding and the number of families that can be supported annually to determine when to issue vouchers. Housing Authorities will not issue vouchers if the vouchers cannot be supported with funds.

In regards to landlord compliance to maintain their rental unit through-out the tenancy of a program participant, there are some HUD requirements that are not required by the city. However, the common goal for a landlord is to ensure a safe and sanitary condition of a unit (maintain the unit) while it's leased. If there are any deficiencies observed during an inspection, the landlords are made aware of what they are and are given time to make sure the repairs are made in a timely manner (prompting a re-inspection). The Housing Choice Voucher Program allows for NHA to enforce certain regulatory requirements in ensuring landlords are in fact maintaining their properties. There shouldn't be any issues if the landlords are maintaining and inspecting their units on a regular basis.

She shared with board members a letter NHA received from one of the program participants who was issued a voucher in May. The letter expressed the participant's experience in trying to find an affordable unit within our jurisdiction (the city limits). The letter informs (in part) the following:

***“As noted in my attached search logs, I contacted dozens of renters to no avail. I was told things such as: There are no available units at the moment. We (referring to a landlord) do not accept HCVs; or The unit is for U.D. Students – with the last comment being extremely discriminative, offensive and discouraging. I have exhausted all of my options of my research from on-line to in-person searches, to the referrals I was given during my briefing. I am aware that the majority of Newark’s jurisdiction is considered the college’s campus, and do understand where some renter preference may come from. In your decision to grant me permission to port, I hope you can take into consideration the above mentioned contributing factors of my request.”***

Mrs. Jordan mentioned this participant was one of eleven families issued a voucher in May. Of the eleven, only two leased-up in our jurisdiction for similar reasons in addition to not being able to find an affordable unit to rent. Mrs. Jordan informed that the participant's request to port into another jurisdiction was approved to avoid the voucher expiring; thus, affording the participant an opportunity to lease-up in another jurisdiction. She mentioned how forcing program participants into another jurisdiction as a means for them to receive rental assistance is wrong; if it's not their choice.

Mrs. Jordan mentioned that the Housing Rental Needs assessment purpose is to determine the rental needs for the entire community (i.e., students, homeowners, seniors, affordable housing program participants) and not specifically for one group. She was very concerned as to the views, opinions; comments and concerns expressed appear to be focusing on one particular group. These views, etc. do not support the majority of those seeking or needing affordable housing and may continue to lead to further segregation in the housing community. These pockets of particular groups residing in a specific area will not bring diversity to our community.

Mrs. Jordan emphasized that in her staff report she has been reporting that all State of Delaware Housing Authorities along with other agencies are working on an Analysis of Impediment Analysis to Fair Housing Choices required by HUD. She mentioned the Housing Choice Voucher program provides that choice to program participants who would not be able to live in our community without the assistance from NHA. However, the exclusion and segregation of the community prevents the participants with a fair choice of options to live in our community. This assessment is to address:

1. Segregation/Integration
2. Racially or Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty
3. Disparities in Access to Opportunity
4. Disproportionate Housing Needs

Mrs. Jordan suggested:

1. City to adopt an ordinance for affordable housing to help rent burden participants
2. City to adopt a policy that designates a percentage of New Construction to be set aside for affordable housing, seniors, disabled, veterans.....
3. City to adopt a cap on how much a landlord in the private sector can charge a student to soften the market; thus, creating more of a balance in rental fees

Mrs. Jordan added, “By everyone working together, we can bring balance and choice (diversity) to our community that affords everyone the opportunity to enjoy our community.”

Mrs. Lane commented that she supports the Rental Needs Assessment – Affordable Housing. She mentioned submitting her feedback to the Mayor regarding the Affordable Rental Housing subcommittee. She mentioned the city is unique and does need change although change is not always welcomed. She mentioned housing programs administered by housing authorities carry a negative stigma for various reasons. She mentioned that there are a lot of rent burdened families in our community and they make hard choices every day. She noted that if we can get a partnership with a developer who shares our views for inclusionary housing, then we can make a difference. She added that what we are discussing is something that the city has never experienced; housing that would be inclusionary for all throughout the community. She suggested inviting our councilmen whose jurisdiction includes the NHA to our next meeting.

Mrs. Ashely commented that one of the recommendations from the Non-Student Affordable Housing subcommittee is to have developers pay a fee in lieu of building affordable housing/home ownership. She mentioned that there will be a need for a lot of money.

Mr. Harris mentioned that he raised his children in George Reed Village which has a lot of college rentals in that neighborhood and there were no real issues. He agrees that it should be about choice.

Dr. Lewis asked if there is something we should be doing in support of the letter we received. Mrs. Jordan responded that from a housing authority’s standard point, we did all we could in allowing her to port to find housing in another jurisdiction. In terms of what she experienced during her search for a unit, Mr. Gouge

and Mrs. Lane responded that she can file a fair housing complaint with the Human Relations Department in Wilmington.

Mr. Brown was supportive and suggested Media Coverage.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Mobile Food Pantry Drive:**

NHA in collaboration with the Area Welfare Committee and the Delaware Food Pantry will be hosting its 2<sup>nd</sup> Food Drive on September 21<sup>st</sup>. Currently, there are 18 families registered for this event. Online registration will also be available on the date of the event.

**Community Development Block Grant:**

NHA is still waiting to receive notice from the County regarding the request to re-allocate the funds awarded under the 44<sup>th</sup> year.

**CY 2020 Capital Fund Certification:**

NHA submitted its certification for capital fund certification on July 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Public Housing Assessment for FY 3/31/2019:**

NHA received notice from HUD that the Low Income Public Housing program assessment for FY 3/31/2019 received an overall PHAS score of 94 under the small PHA Deregulation to maintain its High Performer Status.

**RAD Negotiations at Alder Creek:**

NHA and its team have begun negotiations with the Ingerman team to determine if there is any interest in converting the 42 LIPH units into Section 8. Both teams are performing analysis to determine the feasibility of the conversion.

**Environmental Review:**

NHA submitted the Environmental Review required for the proposed redevelopment. A review is pending. This process will allow for public comments within a 45 day review period.

**Re-Entry Program – Delaware Statewide:**

PHA's in Delaware, Delaware Dept. of Corrections, State of Delaware Criminal Justice, Connections and community support programs along with our consultant (Vera Institute of Justice) have proposed a Scope of Work template for the Family Re-Entry Program. The workgroup continues to make progress in this pilot program.

**Analysis of Impediment Study:**

NHA is pleased to report that in collaboration with all PHA's and other community leaders, progress has been made on the Analysis of Impediment Study required by HUD. A draft of the report is under review and the final report should follow shortly.

**Opening of NHA's waiting lists:**

NHA is pleased to report that it successfully processed about 1,000 applications for both programs during the month of July.

The Chairperson asked for approval of the Staff Reports from the months of June and July. Mrs. Lane made a motion to approve the Staff Reports. The motion was 2nd by Mr. Brown.

Aye 3 (Mrs. Lane, Ms. Ashley and Mr. Brown)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 3 to 0  
Abstain: Dr. Lewis (newly appointed)

#### **IV. Committee Reports:**

##### **A. Report of Policies, Procedures, Compliance & Personnel Committee – Chairperson (Mr. Brown):**

- (a). Proposed Beg Bug Policy: Tabled**
- (b). Proposed Fair Housing Non-Discrimination Policy:**

After a brief review, Mr. Brown asked for a motion to accept the policy. Mrs. Lane made a motion to accept the policy. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Ashely.

A brief discussion was held regarding the protected classes mentioned in the policy. If changes are to be made, the policy will be amended.

##### **B. Report from Development Committee – Chairperson (Vacant):**

###### **(a). Overview – Update:**

A Chairperson for this sub-committee is vacant. Mrs. Jordan provided the update. In the report from the Executive Director, Mrs. Jordan updated the board on the process of the Environmental Review and the negotiations with a potential RAD conversion at Alder Creek.

In addition to what was reported earlier, Mrs. Jordan added that the appraisal of NHA's entire housing stock was assessed. She thanks Mrs. Lane and Mr. Gouge for their assistance. Overall, the Delaware Appraisal Group assessments of properties owned and managed by the authority appear to be within reason. The appraisals will assist NHA in its redevelopment plans.

Mr. Gouge asked that board members keep the results of the appraisals confidential.

Mrs. Jordan asked if there was an interest from any board member to fill the seat as Chairperson of the Development Committee.

Mrs. Lane recommended that Mrs. Jordan continue providing the updates for this committee until a member expresses interest.

**C. Report of Finance Committee – Chairperson (Ms. Shand):**

**(a) Monthly Financials**

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Ms. Shand, was not present. In her absence, Mrs. Jordan presented the financial reports for the period covering April 2019 – June 2019. There were no questions regarding expenses or income within this period for either program.

**D. Strategic Planning Committee – Chairperson (Ms. Shand):**

There was no activity to report from this committee.

**V. Attorney Issues:**

N/A

**VI. Old Business:**

- A. From the other Commissioners:
1. Discussion of a Retreat – In the absence of Ms. Shand, a brief discussion took place with the board members present to determine what kind of training/workshop was being suggested as well as who could facilitate it. Mrs. Jordan mentioned contracting Nan McKay to facilitate the training hosted by NHA. It was suggested that Mrs. Jordan hold a ½ day workshop to provide Commissioners with an overview of their roles and responsibilities and to provide some insight into the programs administered by the authority.
- B. From the Executive Director:
1. Discussion of Nomination for Vacant Vice-Chairperson of the Board-After a brief discussion among the board members present, Ms. Ashley expressed interested in fulfilling the Vacant Vice-Chairperson’s position. A motion was made by Mr. Brown to nominate Ms. Ashley as Vice-Chairperson of the board. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mrs. Lane.  

Aye 3 (Mrs. Lane, Mr. Harris and Mr. Brown)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 3 to 0  
Abstain: Dr. Lewis (newly appointed)
  2. Discussion of Nomination for Vacant Chairperson of the Development Committee-Since there was no interest from current board members to fill the chairperson of the development committee; it was suggested to have Mrs. Jordan continue with the monthly updates for this committee.
- C. From Legal Counsel:
- Mr. Gouge reported that routine court actions took place this month. One was a judgment on a former tenant left owing money and the other was a wage attachment on another former tenant).

Dr. Lewis asked where the court hearings are held. Mr. Gouge responded, “JP court 13 in Wilmington”.

**VII. New Business:**

- A. From Commissioners: N/A
- B. From the Executive Director: N/A
- C. From Legal Counsel: N/A

**VIII. Visitors and/or Petition:**

Mrs. White was present and asked some questions:

- 1. “How many vouchers does NHA have leased up?” Mrs. Jordan responded, “87”
- 2. “How many landlords participate in the voucher program?” Mrs. Jordan responded, “25 and some have multiple listings”.
- 3. “What is NHA’s jurisdiction?” Mrs. Jordan responded, “Just the city limits of Newark”.

She mentioned not hearing at council meetings any discussion regarding an ordinance for affordable housing but thought that perhaps she could mention it at one of the council meetings.

**X. Adjournment:**

The Chairperson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Lane made a motion for the board to adjourn. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Brown.

Aye 3 (Mrs. Lane, Ms. Ashley and Mr. Brown)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 3 to 0  
Abstain: Dr. Lewis (newly appointed)

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:41 PM**

**Minutes Submitted by: Marene M. Jordan, Executive Director**