

**Newark Housing Authority
Board of Commissioners
October 9, 2019**

Summary of Meeting Minutes

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by the Board Vice-Chairperson, Marguerite Ashley.

I. Roll Call:

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

Absent: Lloyd Harris

Note: NHA has one board vacancy.

Note: NHA's meeting agenda was re-arranged until the guest arrived. The Vice-Chairperson informed all that Councilman, James Horning would not be present for this meeting.

III. Approval of Minutes:

(a). Meeting Minutes from August 14, 2019

The Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the August 14th meeting. Mrs. Lane made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was 2nd by Mr. Brown.

Aye 4 (Mrs. Lane, Ms. Shand, Mr. Brown and Dr. Lewis)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

IV. Report of the Executive Director:

(a). Staff Reports:

The Vice-Chairperson asked for the report of the Executive Director for the months of August and September. The reports were combined because the board did not have a quorum in September. Mrs. Jordan provided the following report:

CDBG applications:

Mrs. Jordan acknowledged that Mrs. Lane is the representative appointed by Mayor and Council to fill the seat on the Community Development Block Grant/Revenue Sharing Program reserved for the Newark Housing Authority. Mrs. Jordan informed that NHA submitted a planning grant application under the 45th year that was approved. NHA will receive funds in the amount of \$25,000 to help offset some of our pre-development cost. NHA also submitted another planning grant (phase II) submitted for the 46th year allocation. The results of this grant have not been determined.

SEMAP Assessment for FYE 3/31/2019:

NHA's SEMAP score will remain at 85%; thus, a standard performer as our appeal was denied. Currently NHA's utilization percentage is a 93%. HUD requires a PHA to maintain a 95% to comply. NHA has taken the appropriate steps to improve our lease-up percentage to restore our high performing status. NHA will be issuing approximately 20 vouchers on October 11th. NHA has already reached out to our current landlords and the landlord association. The agency received several new property listings as a result of our community outreach.

FYE 3/31/2019 Independent Audit:

NHA's FYE 3/31/2019 audit report is available in a draft form. There were no audit findings and the potential liability issue of compensated accrued absence is resolved. There was a minor board approved adjustment to the ED's contract to clearly state how compensated time is earned and paid out. The auditors are scheduled to present the final audit at the November 13th meeting.

Mobile Food Initiatives:

The mobile food pantry initiative scheduled for September 21st at Alder Creek was canceled due to low registration. The Area Welfare Committee and the DE Food Bank anticipate holding this event in the spring. However, NHA did attend the food distribution event held on September 25th in New Castle.

Statewide Analysis of Impediments (AI) Public Hearing:

NHA's representatives attended the Public Hearing at the Bear, DE Library to take part in the draft of the Statewide Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. One of the recommendations is to expand DE Fair Housing Act's source of income protections to include voucher holders. This recommendation may require Voucher Holders to become a protected class in renting in the private sector as part of the Fair Housing.

Statewide Family Re-entry Program:

NHA in collaboration with all PHA's in DE will be introducing the Family Re-entry Program by the end of October which would include a public comment period. This pilot program is a statewide initiative developed to help reunite family members released from prisons with families participating in Low Income Public Housing Programs. The working group is currently working on a unified policy that considers a criminal history matrix, admission's policy, house rules and resident agreements to make this a successful pilot program. The 2nd phase would be to expand the pilot program into our section 8 program.

Mrs. Lane asked for clarification regarding the Food Bank Drives. Mrs. Jordan informed that the Mobile Food Bank scheduled for September 21st at Alder Creek was canceled due to low registrations. NHA was informed that in order for the mobile truck to be dispatched, there needed to be 50 families pre-registered (a new regulation). NHA had 20 families pre-registered for this event.

In reference to the food distribution event held on September 25th in New Castle, NHA circulated the information to our program participants and did attend this event. However, NHA could not confirm if any of our program participants attended this event.

Mrs. Lane asked how NHA informed the landlords of vouchers being issued on October 11th. Mrs. Jordan responded that NHA did community outreach in terms of calling our current landlords asking if they had any vacancies. NHA also asked current participating landlords if they knew of other landlords who may be interested in listing their properties in our program. NHA also contacted the landlord association and did an on-line research. As a result, NHA had two new landlord listings.

Dr. Lewis asked how many people attended the Public Hearing on the Statewide Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. Mrs. Jordan mentioned there were at least 10 people. A diverse group inclusive of members of legal aide, board of commissioners, developer associates and non-profit agencies as well as NHA attended.

The Vice-Chairperson asked for approval of the Staff Reports from the months of August and September. Ms. Shand made a motion to approve the Staff Reports. The motion was 2nd by Mrs. Lane.

Aye 4 (Mrs. Lane, Ms. Shand, Mr. Brown and Dr. Lewis)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

II. Guest:

The Vice-Chairperson acknowledged that our guest Brittney Wooding had arrived. Mrs. Jordan welcomed Ms. Wooding to the meeting. Mrs. Jordan mentioned the purpose of the invite was for Ms. Wooding to share (with the board) her experiences in searching for affordable housing in our jurisdiction as a participant of the Housing Choice Voucher program administered by NHA.

Mrs. Jordan referenced receiving Ms. Wooding's letter requesting to port-put of NHA's jurisdiction due to barriers that were preventing her from leasing up in our jurisdiction. Mrs. Jordan asked Ms. Wooding to share as much about her experience that she was comfortable in sharing.

Ms. Wooding shared details from the time she received her voucher to the numerous contacts she made with private owners, property managers and apartment complexes that left her feeling very discouraged to the point that she had considered giving up her voucher. She referenced being told things such as "There are no units available", the units would not be available for several months and they do not accept section 8. However, the most discourage and offensive comment she receive was that the units she was interested in were only for U.D. students.

Ms. Wooding acknowledged how after hearing the last comment from a landlord, she felt she was being discriminated against and overwhelmed with the entire process and sought guidance from her mother. She reference contacting the NHA and speaking to Meghan about her options and what she had experienced. It was then that she had written a request to port-out of NHA's jurisdiction which was later approved by the Executive Director.

Ms. Wooding informed all that she did find a place in Wilmington and is settling in. She added that she did not know that finding affordable housing would be such a challenge in Newark and that housing was an ongoing concern for NHA.

Mrs. Lane (commissioner) was the first to thank Ms. Wooding for sharing her housing experience and taking the time out to attend our meeting. Mrs. Lane acknowledged that it was nice seeing her and being able to add a face to the story. Ms. Wooding was asked if would she attend a council meeting and share her story. Ms. Wood replied “Yes”.

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:

The Non-Discrimination Policy was approved on August 14th. However, there were some subsequent changes related to the State of Delaware’s protected classes. The changes were discussed and approved on October 9th. Mrs. Lane made a motion to accept the amended Fair Housing Non-Discrimination Policy. The motion was 2nd by Mr. Brown.

Aye 4 (Mrs. Lane, Ms. Shand, Mr. Brown and Dr. Lewis)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

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

(a). Overview – Update provided by Mrs. Jordan:

Mrs. Jordan informed that NHA’s team has determined that converting our Low Income Public Housing Portfolio to Section 8 can be done without any drastic changes to our current administration. Our options include:

- 1). A Streamlined Voluntary Conversion that would include Alder Creek as all Public Housing units would have to be included in the Section 8 conversion.
- 2). NHA could move forward with a demo/dispo application to convert our remaining 54 units into Section 8; and Alder Creek could remain the same or Alder Creek could agree to a RAD conversion.

As part of our redevelopment plan, this exercise was a key component that needed to be explored to determine funding sources and long term viability of NHA. There are several new HUD programs that are more attractive now; given their backlog in disbursing capital funds to make capital improvements on Low Income Public Housing Programs.

Conclusion for George Reed:

1A). If NHA chooses to convert under Streamlined Voluntary Conversion, HUD will issue TPV vouchers for our public housing units with associated funding.

1B). If NHA chooses to convert under the demo/dispo Section 18 application we would have to submit our assessment from Nelrod that shows that 36-1 bedroom units meet obsolescence. Meaning it would be advantageous to build new rather than to renovate. We would also have to submit another Section 18 application for the scattered site properties. NHA would receive TPV vouchers for all public housing units.

Conclusion for Alder Creek:

1A). If Ingerman agrees to a RAD conversion converting the 42 Low Income Public Housing units to Section 8 units, this conversion would allow funding under either PBV or PBRA Vouchers. This would allow NHA to convert under the Streamlined Voluntary Conversion.

1B). If Ingerman does not agree to the RAD conversion, Alder Creek will function the same affording NHA the option to convert under the demo/dispo Section 18 application.

Mrs. Jordan stated that NHA is in a position to craft our RFQ to procure a developer partner advocating exactly what we want. A partnership where NHA co-manages the new development; our site plan which illustrates the number of new units we want built (68-adding an additional 12 units) and a conversion that includes associated funding (Tenant Protection Vouchers which HUD will award) would be in line with what we are looking for. These vouchers are in addition to our current 209; leaving our options open for future partnerships increasing our affordable housing initiatives. We will lease the land to our developer partner and seek general oversight leaving all the development details and construction to our partner.

Recommendation:

1. NHA's recommendation is to move forward with a Streamlined Voluntary Conversion with Alder Creek agreeing to a RAD Conversion.
2. Craft the RFQ to procure a developer to help modify and define some of the remaining details of our re-development plans.

2A. NHA's Developer partner will be responsible for submitting a Tax Credits application in April.

Ms. Shand asked Mrs. Jordan if she prepared a Board Resolution for the board to approve. Mrs. Jordan responded, "No". She wanted to discuss the options first.

Mrs. Lane asked Mrs. Jordan to prepare a summary of options (option A vs. option B) for the board to review along with a Board Resolution seeking board approval for the next meeting.

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

(a) Monthly Financials:

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Ms. Shand, presented the financial reports for the period covering April 2019 – August 2019 for both the Low Income Public Housing Program and the Section 8 Program. There were no questions regarding expenses or income within this period for either program.

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

(a). Retreat:

After a brief discussion, it was agreed upon that an off-site informal retreat will be held some time in February at a location to be determined. The retreat would allow for networking between NHA and the commissioners so they can become more aware of programs offered and their requirements, commissioner responsibility and oversight, landlord outreach and their responsibilities and any other housekeeping issues.

V. Attorney Issues:

N/A

VI. Old Business:

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

VII. New Business:

- A. From Commissioners: N/A
- B. From the Executive Director: Annual Plan – NHA will be working on the Annual plan that will include any updates from HUD, policy changes, updates on development activities.
- C. From Legal Counsel: N/A

VIII. Visitors and/or Petition:

See comments under Section II: Guest

X. Adjournment:

The Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Brown made a motion for the board to adjourn. The motion was 2nd by Dr. Lewis.

Aye 4 (Mrs. Lane, Ms. Shand, Mr. Brown and Dr. Lewis)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:49 PM

Minutes Submitted by: Marene M. Jordan, Executive Director