

**Newark Housing Authority  
Board of Commissioners  
February 12, 2020**

**Summary of Meeting Minutes**

**Opening:**

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at approximately 5:01 PM by the Board Vice-Chairperson, Marguerite Ashely.

**I. Roll Call:**

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

Absent: Lloyd Harris

Note: Mayoral appointment, Mr. Paul Tillman was in attendance as a visitor as his official confirmation paperwork was not circulated prior to the meeting.

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

**(a). Meeting Minutes from January 8, 2020**

The Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the January 8th meeting. Before the meeting minutes were approved, Mrs. Jordan noted two typos. With the two typos being noted, Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the minutes with the corrections. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dr. Lewis.

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

**(b). Executive Session Minutes from November 13, 2019**

The approval of the Executive Session Minutes was tabled until next month.

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

**(a). Staff Reports from January 2020:**

The Vice-Chairperson asked for the report of the Executive Director from the month of January. Mrs. Jordan provided the following report:

**Statewide Pilot Re-entry Program Update:**

PHA's in Delaware and the Delaware Dept. of Corrections met on January 29th to discuss progress made to the "Statewide" Pilot Re-entry Program. DSHA began their public comment period on January 17<sup>th</sup>; will be hosting their public hearing on February 19th and concluding the public comment period on March 5th. NHA was planning to open its public comment period on February 14th and hosting its public hearing on March 31st. However, it was decided to delay both until some additional clarification is received regarding the referral process for the pilot program. This postponement will allow NHA time to complete the

procurement process in the selection of a co-developer. We anticipate opening the public comment period for the Re-entry program for NHA sometime in April.

NHA forwarded a letter to Brad Ingerman to introduce him and his team to the Pilot Program and to inquire as if there was any interest in extending this program to the families at Alder Creek. The Ingerman team is reviewing the documents to determine if there is any interest. NHA has not received any feedback.

**Statewide Analysis of Impediments:**

NHA was notified by DSHA that there is a delay in finalizing the Statewide Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. NHA is awaiting further guidance/instructions on how and when the process will continue.

**Town Hall Meeting:**

NHA attended the Town Hall Meeting held by Jason Lawhorn from District 5 on January 10, 2020 at the George Wilson Center. The various topics discussed were helpful and informative. To provide the Councilmen with a little more information of our affordable housing needs and challenges, NHA prepared a generic power-point presentation to illustrate some of the issues of concern.

**New Castle County 5 -Year Plan:**

NHA was contacted by a representative from Housing and Community Development Specialist with M&L Associates. The County of New Castle has hired M&L to complete the Consolidated Plan for the next 5 year cycle. NHA was asked for and provided the information requested as an update to plans specific to NHA.

**Environmental Review for the Proposed Redevelopment of George Reed Village:**

NHA is pleased to report that the Environmental Review for the proposed re-development was finally submitted without further delays and did not require additional technical assistance. We are hopeful that the review is completed within 60-90 days resulting in a timely approval.

**Community Support:**

NHA was contacted on January 23, 2020 by a representative from Pike Creek Mortgage Service located in Newark. The reason for the contact was due to Pike Creek Mortgage being given a list of housing agencies when they expressed their desire “to give back”; especially to the local community. Pike Creek Mortgage has a strong belief in the power of giving back and explores different avenues of doing so each year. This year, the representative reached out to NHA in hope that they could provide rental assistance to a local family participating in our program deserving of and in need of such assistance. Whether it be a single parent family or any family dealing with a hardship; Pike Creek’s goal and intent is to pay the family’s rent for 12 months to provide them with the opportunity to get back on their feet. Our agency, the Newark Housing Authority, was selected by them as a good and appropriate place to start.

NHA met with the representative on January 29, 2020. As a result of this meeting and after selecting two scattered site families who meet their criteria of currently experiencing or having experienced a hardship, the owner of Pike Creek Mortgage said “Yes”. They committed to paying one full years’ rent for the two

recommended families. NHA is working on coordinating a media event with the Newark Post to cover the story.

**Rental Workgroup:**

NHA attended the Council meeting held on February 4, 2020 as Council members received the recommendations from the workgroup regarding the housing needs within the City. As you all know, I forwarded an email to Mayor and Council inviting them to meet with me one-on-one. This was done in an effort to provide them with an opportunity to learn and ask questions regarding the programs before they make a final decision to approve or disapprove any recommendations. NHA believes providing the Council members with more information will be beneficial in their decision making.

In hearing the comments and questions from the Council members during the meeting, I think in general they all support the need but are not sure how to address the issue of the constant student housing demand without efforts and commitments from the University.

It's my understanding the Jen Wallace (representing district #3) and Stu Markham (from district #6) will not be seeking re-election. NHA did receive a response from Jen informing me that she will not be on council when the final workgroup recommendations are presented to council. She suggested that I reach out to her successor.

***Some comments from Council members during the meeting were:***

Mayor Clifton acknowledged, "Our community is not just for students and should not be perceived as such and the focus should be on the long term residents and those who want to live in our community."

Question:

"Can students reside in affordable housing?"

Answer:

"The answer is "Yes" as long as they are income eligible (with or without their parent's income)."

Comment:

"The recommendation of having developers pay a fee in lieu of designating a percentage of the new units built for affordable housing would require the city solicitor to find out if council approves this recommendation. Will there be legal ramifications?"

Comment:

"We need to be mindful that the Section 8 voucher could bring down the property value of the properties in the neighborhood."

Comment was made regarding inspections:

"If a landlord wanted their rental permit renewed they should agree to the inspections or have their permit non-renewed."

### ***What's next?***

The workgroup subcommittees will reconvene to discuss the feedback from council. The group will work to finalize the final recommendations for council approval sometime in June or July. NHA has forwarded a copy of our policy to the non-student/affordable housing committee members as it relates to the eligibility of students for further discussion.

NHA has also reached out to the President of the Landlord Association and discussed the best way to increase landlord participation in the voucher program. NHA was asked to provide rental caps, inspection requirements and general information on how the program works to be presented to the Landlord Association board members for a discussion at their next meeting. NHA is also open to attending their next quarterly meeting scheduled for some time in May.

### **Commissioner Work Shop:**

The New location is the Embassy Suites on South College Avenue adjacent to TGIF and across from the Bob Carpenter Center. The accommodations are much better. The workshop is scheduled from 1-4 on Wednesday, March 25th. A buffet lunch will be served from 1 – 2:30 pm.

### **CDBG Award:**

NHA received the contract for funds awarded under the 45th year CDBG. The amount was for \$25,000 to help offset some of our pre-development costs.

### **Mobile Food Drive:**

The mobile food pantry in collaboration with NHA will be hosting another food distribution event held on Thursday, April 16th at Alder Creek. The registration process has begun. NHA will need at least 50 registered families in order for the mobile truck to be mobilized.

The Vice-Chairperson thanked Ms. Jordan for the report and then asked for a motion to approve the Staff Report. Dr. Lewis made a motion to approve the reports. The motion was 2nd by Mr. Brown.

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

## **IV. Committee Reports:**

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

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Brown was present and acknowledged there was no report from this committee.

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

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

Mrs. Jordan reported in response to the RFQ Co-Developer Partner solicitation, “NHA received two responses.”

1. Leon N. Weiner & Associates, Inc.
2. The Michaels Organization

Both of these developers have partnered with Delaware Public Housing Agencies to redevelop/renovate affordable housing. Both have impressive backgrounds. Both have applied and received Delaware tax credit allocations to help fund the projects. So, we have an interest from two seasoned developers.

Mrs. Jordan reported that an Evaluation Committee was created who will be reviewing, ranking and scoring the proposals for board approval. The committee members are:

1. Tonya Dempsey and William Dreisbach - our agency representatives from CSG Advisors
2. Gloria Thompson - our grant writer
3. Don gouge - our day to day attorney

Site Visits are scheduled for Monday, February 17th

1. Leon Weiner – Eastlake Villages tour is at 2:30 PM and Main Towers is scheduled for 4:00 PM.
2. Michaels – Lincoln Towers tour is scheduled for 1:30 PM.

Presentation to the Evaluation Committee Members:

1. Leon Weiner is scheduled for Wednesday, February 26th at 11:30 AM.
2. Michaels Organization is scheduled for Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM.

Mrs. Jordan noted that as a result of the site visits and review of the proposals, a recommendation will made at the March meeting for board approval.

**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 – December 2019 for both the Low Income Public Housing Program and the Section 8 Program.

Ms. Shand acknowledged reviewing the reports and did not have any questions. She afforded the board members time to review the reports and ask questions (if necessary).

**(b) Proposed Budget for 2021:**

Ms. Shand introduced the proposed budget for 2021. She informed the proposed budget will cover the period from April 2020 to March 2021 which is consistent with NHA’s fiscal year. She referenced the sources of revenue and expenses for each program (LIPH vs. HCV) proposing a combined operating budget of \$1,291,194.

She referenced the detailed budget comparison report created to illustrate the proposed budget vs. budget for 2020. This report also illustrates the projected LIPH budget and the LIPH actual sources of revenue and expenses to help illustrate the consistency of the budgets.

She informed that the budget is being proposed today and NHA will seek board approval at the March meeting. She informed the board to reach out to her or Mrs. Jordan should any questions or concerns develop between now and the next board meeting.

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

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Ms. Shand was present and had no report from this committee.

**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:
  - 1. Moving-to-Work (MTW) designation (HUD Approved Designation Required) – Mrs. Jordan spoke briefly about interest in becoming a MTW housing authority. The Moving to Work allows PHAs to have administrative flexibility across several funding sources, including HCVs, and exempts program requirements from voucher rules; allowing the agency to use the program to address local needs. To receive this designation, there is a two-step process as outlined in PIH Notice 2018-17 issued on October 11, 2018.
    - A. NHA must meet the eligibility criteria and submit a letter of interest package to HUD for HUD to conduct an eligibility criteria review.
    - B. NHA must submit a MTW plan, application and supporting materials.  
Mrs. Jordan will follow-up with more details and update the board at a later date.
- C. From Legal Counsel: N/A

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

Ms. White a resident from Newark was in attendance. She asked questions and provided comments.

1. She referenced what Pike Creek Mortgage Company did for two families was a very good thing. However, she raised concerns regarding a press release (if not released properly) and the possible backlash it may have on other families and NHA.
2. She sought clarification into the Mobile Food Bank planned for April 16, 2020 at Alder Creek. She asked if the event was just for Alder Creek residents or did the event include the seniors and other families? Mrs. Jordan responded, “The event is for all LIPH and HCV families.”
3. She asked if Newark will remain a “Public Housing Authority” if they convert to only vouchers. Mrs. Jordan responded, “Once NHA makes the decision to covert, the decision will be permanent.”
4. She asked if NHA will own the new units once they are built. Mrs. Jordan responded, “The developer and investors will own the properties throughout the compliance period and NHA will have an opportunity to purchase the units after that period.”

Mr. Paul Tillman – The new board member was appointed by the Mayor during the Council meeting held on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Tillman was appointed to replace Kevin Heitzenroder. Mr. Tillman shared that he is new to Newark with just a little over one year of residency. He is semi-retired. His interest aligns with NHA as he currently works part-time for a nonprofit whose mission is to serve people in need. He has worked for nonprofits around the world and in the US.

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dr. Lewis.

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

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:16 PM**

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