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**Newark Housing Authority
Board of Commissioners
June 9, 2021
Revised 8/11/2021**

Summary of Meeting (Virtual Zoom) Minutes

Opening:

Due to technical difficulties with the Zoom Login, the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at approximately 5:19 PM by the Vice-Chairperson, Marguerite Ashley.

I. Roll Call:

The Vice-Chairperson made a request for Roll Call. Board of Commissioners present: Marguerite Ashley, Nikki Lane, Paul Tillman and Denise Forman-Gaines. Marene Jordan (Executive Director) and Attorney Donald Gouge Jr. were also present.

Commissioner Emile Brown was not present for the meeting.

The Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes listed below.

II. Approval of Minutes:

(a). Meeting Minutes from May 12, 2021

Ms. Lane made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes from May 12, 2021. The motion was 2nd by Mr. Tillman.

Aye 3 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Tillman and Mrs. Forman-Gaines)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 3 to 0

III. Report of the Executive Director:

(a). Staff Reports from May 2021

The Vice-Chairperson asked for the report from the Executive Director for the month of May 2021. Ms. Jordan provided the following report.

Increase in Affordable Housing Options:

Last month NHA reported that there was a decrease in affordable housing offered by one of our apartment complexes.

However, last month NHA received a new 3-bedroom listing from a private landlord. NHA is currently assisting a port-in from New Castle County with the process of the possibility of renting this unit if it is affordable.

CDBG Funding:

NHA requested a release of CDBG funds awarded in the amount of \$52,400 from the City of Newark. The funds will offset the predevelopment costs associated with George Reed Village.

DELJIS Training:

NHA received the necessary training as part of the screening criteria for the Family Re-entry Pilot Program. The group has resumed Zoom Meetings to discuss ways to increase the public's awareness of this program.

City of Newark Expansion of McKee's Solar Park:

The Newark City Manager's Office is looking into a large energy saving performance contract project for Newark which includes a substantial expansion of the McKee's Solar Park. In doing so, the site plans show that an oak tree planned for removal near McKee's is actually on the Newark Housing Authority's property and not the City's. The tree in question will impact the City's solar output for additional panels installed. Therefore, they have asked permission to cut the tree down, which will require NHA's approval. The City would cover the cost of this tree removal and proposes to plant one or a few more trees for NHA elsewhere on the property. Although there is no firm timeline for this removal, they would like to have this completed by the end of summer; ahead of the solar expansion in the fall.

As a follow-up to this request, NHA contacted a representative from DNREC to better assist in the planning process. Due to the prior use of the site, DNREC must be notified in advance of land-disturbing activities that should be accompanied with a detailed scope of work and a plan for executing any work for their review and approval. A follow-up is pending.

Emergency Housing Vouchers Issued by HUD:

As part of the American Rescue Plan, Congress allocated \$5 Billion in funding for Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs). For a PHA to be eligible for an allocation of these vouchers, a PHA must currently administer the HCV program through an existing Consolidated Annual Contributions Contract with HUD.

HUD's allocation formula is designed to direct emergency vouchers to the PHA's operating in areas where the EHV's eligible populations have the greatest need while also taking into account the PHA's capacity and the requirements to ensure geographic diversity, including rural areas.

For an individual to be eligible, the individual must fall into one of the following categories:

- Homeless;
- At risk of homelessness;
- Fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking;
- Recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having a high risk of housing instability.

HUD has established the meaning of each of the categories for an individual to be eligible to assist the PHA with the issuance of these vouchers. The minimum allocation size is 25 vouchers. The EHV's are assisted with funding/fees in administering these vouchers.

HUD is also waiving regulatory requirements used to cover the grounds under which a PHA may deny an applicant admission in the program and in certain cases is required to do so.

What does this mean for NHA?

Of the five (5) PHA's in Delaware, two (2) PHAs were not selected to receive these vouchers. NHA was one of those not selected. However, as a receiving PHA, NHA cannot refuse to assist an incoming EHV family, regardless of whether the PHA does or does not currently administer EHV's under its own ACC. NHA may absorb the family into its regular HCV program or may bill the initial PHA. In addition, HUD will be modifying the reporting requirements to track and monitor these EHV's to ensure proper administering.

CARES ACT Supplemental Funds – Section 8:

As of June 1, 2021, NHA assisted thirteen (13) of our Section 8 participants with direct one-time utility payments of \$350.00 made to the City of Newark on their behalf. These thirteen (13) families responded to a survey initiated and circulated by NHA which asked questions related to hardships they may have experienced or are experiencing due to COVID-19.

After the direct payments to the city, NHA has estimated available CARES ACT Funds of \$30,000 that must be disbursed by December 31, 2021.

CARES ACT Supplemental Funds – LIPH:

NHA will be utilizing some of these funds to upgrade our Housing System Software to better assist with working remotely should there be a future need to do so. It will also update our software; enabling it to run more efficiently.

Estimated available Funds: \$17,000

Property Management:

NHA is still experiencing a great deal of costly repairs due to the inefficiency and needed repairs of aging properties. As recent as the last several weeks, we have had contractors on site due to plumbing issues. We were made aware that these issues will continue to occur because of the aging infrastructure. We were also made aware that we will have some difficulties resolving some issues because the updated equipment cannot be accommodated by the existing infrastructure.

Mrs. Jordan opened the floor for questions from the Commissioners.

Ms. Lane asked for clarification as to whether the sewer line replacements extended beyond NHA's property line.

Mrs. Jordan responded, "No." Both sewer line replacements were inside of the units. Both repairs were inspected by Mr. Brian Daring from the City of Newark's Code Enforcement Department.

Ms. Lane commented that Mr. Daring is very knowledgeable and responsive to the needs in the community.

Ms. Lane asked for clarification into the type of equipment we upgraded in the past.

Mrs. Jordan responded, "We upgraded the telephone system. We are now considering the need to upgrade our Housing Software from Housing Pro 8 to Housing Pro 9.3 Plus. The current version we are using is no longer being support by maintenance upgrades. The updated version (Housing Pro 9.3 plus Cloud Migration) will allow NHA to utilize the software remotely; if need be."

Ms. Lane inquired about the number of vacancies.

Mrs. Jordan responded that we had three (3) senior vacancies within a matter of one (1) month. The cause for the vacancies were due to two (2) senior's passing away and one moving to Main Towers. Mrs. Jordan noted that two (3) senior units are leased and the remaining one (1) unit is currently being prepped for re-occupancy and is already leased.

Mrs. Denise Forman-Gaines asked how long it usually takes for HUD to approve an application.

Mrs. Jordan responded, "It really varies based on the type of application submitted." She noted that a few years ago we submitted an application to sell two scattered site rental properties and the turnaround time with HUD's approval was approximately 6 months (start to finish).

With the current Section 18 application to demo the existing 36 1-bedroom units, the review process is a bit more time consuming because we have to prove obsolescence; meaning we must meet or exceed HUD's threshold in order for the SAC office to approve the application.

Ms. Ashley noted that when the PNA was completed some years ago, the report reflected about a \$50,000 difference in cost favoring demolition vs. renovation.

Mrs. Jordan added, "The SAC office reviews a Total Development Cost spreadsheet (TDC) in performing the obsolescent test in addition to other components of the application to complete their review."

Mrs. Denise Forman-Gaines asked if we will need to resubmit the entire application.

Ms. Jordan responded, "Yes."

Ms. Lane inquired into the most recent appraisals of two properties that have received interest of purchase from the public. She wanted confirmation that the appraisals reflect an increase in property value.

Mr. Gouge reminded all that we are not to discuss any specifics related to these two properties unless we are holding an Executive Session.

The Vice-Chairperson asked if there were any more comments or questions regarding Mrs. Jordan's staff report. The Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the Staff Report for the month of April 2021. Mrs. Forman-Gaines made a motion to approve the Staff Report. The motion was 2nd by Mr. Tillman.

Aye 3 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Tillman and Mrs. Forman-Gaines)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 3 to 0

IV. Committee Reports:

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

(a). Committee Update:

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Brown, was not present for this meeting. There was no report from this sub-committee.

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

(a). Committee Update:

The Vice-Chairperson of the Board acknowledged that this committee still does not have a Chairperson so she asked Ms. Jordan to provide the update. Ms. Jordan provided the following report.

Development Committee Update:

Application #DDA0011025 for the Proposed George Reed Village II:

NHA/HUD/SAC and its consultants were able to hold a Zoom meeting to discuss the Section 18 application status. NHA will be submitting additional information in the next week or so to better assist the SAC office in their review of the application.

During the call, NHA informed all that the current 36 1-bedroom units (built in the late 1960's) would not meet the City of Newark's (current) Building Codes. She informed the board that the City is currently using the International Building Codes (version 2018).

In response, NHA was advised when re-submitting the TDC to reference specific Building Code Requirements/Mandates that are relevant to each item in the spreadsheet.

NHA also meet with a City of Newark Code Enforcement Representative (Brian Daring) who was extremely helpful in providing specific Building Code Mandates for the redevelopment of George Reed Village to assist with the HUD review in receiving a timely response.

Mrs. Jordan noted that NHA's request (supported by the City of Newark) to the Joint Capital Improvement Committee (DE Legislatives) for a financial Bond allocation of \$500,000 will be voted on in early June.

NHA remains hopeful for consideration in receiving an allocation in support of the redevelopment of George Reed Village.

Ms. Ashley asked if NHA had submitted a letter of support.

Mrs. Jordan responded, "We did not." She added that she is not sure if a letter is needed being that our developer partner had initiated the request for bond assistance.

Section 18 Disposition Application for two scattered site rentals:

Section 18 Disposition Application for two scattered site rentals:

NHA's consultant Ten Bears Environmental Associates Co. is making progress in the required Environmental Review. The report will be uploaded to HUD for their review and approval in the next few weeks. Once this review is approved, NHA will be able to submit the Section 18 application to dispose of two (2) scattered site rental properties.

C. Report of Finance Committee – Chairperson (Vacant):

(a) Monthly Financials:

The Vice-Chairperson of the Board acknowledged that this sub-committee does not have a Chairperson after Ms. Shand's resignation last month. She asked the board members if they had any question regarding the financial reports. She asked Ms. Jordan to proceed with the report from this committee. Ms. Jordan provided the following report.

She acknowledged that everyone had received a copy of the monthly financials for a full year (April 2020 – March 2021).

As the reports show, the year-end closed with a positive net income. Both reports reflect expenses were less than we budgeted for. This report reflects the finances submitted to HUD for their review and approval of our unaudited financials.

She added, "NHA did meet the deadline in submitting the unaudited financials due to HUD by May 30th. The financials are currently under HUD's review."

She reported, "NHA confirmed the Independent 3rd-party audit of the unaudited financials field work is to begin on July 12th."

Mrs. Jordan opened the floor for questions from the Commissioners.

Mr. Tillman asked if HUD will take any funds that were not spent in our budget.

Mrs. Jordan responded, "No. We usually have a zero based budget but expenses were less than we budgeted for due to COVID-19."

Ms. Lane asked, "What budget line item reflects the cost related to the sewer line replacements?"

Mrs. Jordan responded, "The cost related to the sewer line replacements are capital improvements which is not part of our day to day operating budget. Capital Funds were used which is not a budget line item for this type of cost."

D. Strategic Planning Committee – Chairperson (Vacant):

(a). Commissioner Training:

The Vice-Chairperson of the Board acknowledged that this sub-committee does not have a Chairperson after Ms. Shand resigned last month. She acknowledged what we have some upcoming Commissioner Training planned for August. She asked Ms. Jordan to proceed with the report from this committee. Ms. Jordan provided the following report.

Mrs. Jordan confirmed the Commissioner Training, "Essentials for Commissioners" hosted by Nan McKay will be provided via Live Web Training on August 23rd and 24th. The link to the training will be provided a few days before the training is to commence.

Mrs. Jordan noted that Ms. Lewis (newly appointed resident board member) was invited to participate in this training. She is waiting for her official appointment notification before she starts attending meetings.

To assist Ms. Lewis with her Zoom Meeting participation, NHA will be purchasing for her a lap top to use for these meetings. Once her board term ends or she resigns, NHA will require her to return the laptop. NHA will be using CARES ACT funds for this purchase.

Mrs. Jordan asked Ms. Lane if she was interested in the Commissioner Training.

Ms. Lane responded, "No."

Mrs. Jordan noted that Mr. Tillman was able to take part in the HUD online training and found the training to be helpful. She asked Mr. Tillman if he would like to say a few words about the training.

Mr. Tillman acknowledged the training, "Lead the Way", was a little involved and was supposed to monitor ones progress in order to complete the course. However, he wasn't really interested in it but wanted to have some general knowledge of his role as a commissioner for the Newark Housing Authority. The training included 13 units; each taking about 1-2 hours. You complete each unit at your own pace. This training is specific for commissioners and he found the training to be helpful. "There was way too much information," he said. But he felt this training will assist him in August when the group training will take place. However, he did encourage the other commissioners to take the training. He rated the training by giving it 1.5 "thumbs up". He did acknowledge there were some technical issues and there were numerous links to other HUD publications that others may find useful if interested.

V. Attorney Issues:

Mr. Gouge reported that he had no report.

VI. Old Business:

VII. New Business:

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

(a). Discuss/Nominate Vacant Sub-committee Chairperson(s):

Mrs. Jordan acknowledged the following:

1. Ms. Ashley has expressed interest in chairing the Finance sub-committee;

Before Ms. Ashley accepts a vote to chair this sub-committee she would like to have a meeting to have a better understanding of the finances.

Mrs. Jordan will follow-up with a date and time to schedule a meeting with the fee accountant, herself and Ms. Ashley. The nomination for this sub-committee is tabled until the next meeting.

2. Ms. Lane has expressed interest in chairing the strategic planning sub-committee.

Mrs. Forman-Gaines made a motion to nominate Ms. Lane as the Chairperson for this sub-committee. Mr. Tillman 2nd the motion.

Aye 3 (Ms. Ashely, Mr. Tillman and Mrs. Forman-Gaines)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 3 to 0

(b). Discuss/Nominate Chair/Vice-Chairperson(s):

Mrs. Jordan acknowledged the following:

1. Ms. Lane has expressed interest in accepting the position of Chairperson of Board as long as Ms. Ashley is willing to continue with the clerical duties for NHA (check signing). Ms. Ashley is willing to continue with the check signing for the agency.

Mrs. Jordan asked Mr. Gouge if there would be an issue with Ms. Ashley acting as the primary check signer for the agency as that role is the responsibility of the Chairperson being that the

By-laws indicated that financial duties are the performed by the Vice-Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

Mr. Gouge replied that he did not think that would be an issue. He did advise that at some point Ms. Lane needs to be added as a check signer for the agency.

No action was taken in the nomination of a Chair/Vice-Chairperson. The action was tabled until the next meeting.

Mrs. Jordan reminded the board members that we do not meet in the month of July. However, we will be able to have a board meeting in August prior to the commissioner training.

Mrs. Gouge commented that even though the board does not meet in July that it is good practice to keep every 2nd Wednesday of each month blocked off for board members to ensure we are able to hold meetings.

2. Ms. Ashley is willing to continue to serve as Vice-chairperson of the Board.

- C. From Legal Counsel: Mr. Gouge reported that he had numerous communications (via emails) with representatives from the Governor's office (old/new staff) regarding board appointments. He did confirm that Ms. Lewis was appointed as the New Resident Appointment and the Governor's office has acknowledged receiving Ms. Shand's letter of resignation and thanked her for her service. Mr. Gouge commented there was one additional gubernatorial position to address as a replacement for Ms. Shand. He stated Rep Baumbach may have interested applicants.

Mrs. Jordan added that Rep Baumbach did contact her to confirm the number of vacancies the board currently has and the appointing authority. Mrs. Jordan confirmed that we have one vacancy on the board that is a Governor's appointment. Rep. Baumbach asked if the board had a specific skillset needed. Mrs. Jordan responded, "Yes; someone with a development background would be a tremendous help."

In closing, Ms. Ashley noted that her lab reports are encouraging and the treatments are working. She thanked everyone who reached out for their support.

VIII. Visitors and/or Petition: N/A

IX. Adjournment:

The Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Tillman made a motion for the meeting to adjourn. The motion was 2nd by Ms. Lane.

Aye 3 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Tillman and Ms. Forman-Gaines)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 3 to 0

Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:20 PM

Minutes Submitted by: Marene M. Jordan, Executive Director

APPROVED