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**Newark Housing Authority  
Board of Commissioners  
February 9, 2022**

**Summary of Meeting (Virtual Zoom) Minutes**

**Opening:**

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at approximately 5:02 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, Emile Brown, Paul Tillman, Denise Forman-Gaines and Kathleen Lewis. Marene Jordan (Executive Director) and Attorney Donald Gouge Jr. were also present.

Note: Commissioner Anderson was not present for this meeting. The Chairperson, Nikki Lane joined the meeting at approximately 5:10 PM after roll call was taken. Although the Chairperson was present for the meeting, the Vice-Chairperson continued to chair this meeting.

Visitor Present: Roxanne Hayes (Resident of Independence Circle)

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

**(a). Meeting Minutes for January 12, 2022.**

The Vice-Chairperson asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the minutes from the January 12, 2022, meeting. Since there were none, the Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for the January 12, 2022, Board of Commissioner's Meeting.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Vice-Chairpersons Ashley.

Aye 5 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tillman, Mrs. Forman-Gaines and Ms. Lewis)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 5 to 0

**(b). Executive Session Meeting Minutes for January 12, 2022.**

The Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the Executive Session Meeting Minutes from the January 12, 2022, Board of Commissioners' Executive Session Meeting.

Commissioner Forman-Gaines made a motion to approve the Executive Session Meeting Minutes from the January 12, 2022, Board of Commissioners' Executive Session Meeting. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Brown.

Aye 5 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tillman, Mrs. Forman-Gaines and Ms. Lewis)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 5 to 0

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

#### **(a). Staff Report from January 2022**

The Vice-Chairperson asked for the report of the Executive Director for the month of January, 2022. Ms. Jordan provided the following report:

#### **Increase in Affordable Housing Options:**

NHA was contacted by two landlords who have interest in listing their rental property in our program. Both landlords were provided the New Landlord Packet to start that process.

#### **2022 Annual Plan/ 5-year Action Plan Public Hearing:**

The Newark Housing Authority's 2022 Annual Plan/5-year Action Plan received no comments or questions within the 45-day review period commencing on October 15, 2021 and ending on December 2, 2021. The Public Hearing was held on December 9, 2021, with two attendees, Commissioner Tillman and NHA Executive Director Marene Jordan. The plan is due to HUD by January 15, 2022.

#### **Preventative Maintenance:**

As a follow-up to last month's discussion regarding the recent news reports of faulty smoke detectors and electrical space heaters, on January 19, 2022, NHA completed its Preventative Maintenance Inspections for all 54 units. The inspections included the testing of smoke detectors, checking the date of the fire extinguishers' last inspection to ensure it had not expired and that they were fully charged, making sure GFI outlets were operable, verifying that thermostats were functioning properly. Any major related deficiencies were addressed at the time of inspection. Other deficiencies are being addressed by work orders. NHA has resumed its monthly Preventative Maintenance Inspections.

#### **Maintenance Position:**

The Newark Housing Authority advertised for its vacant Maintenance position. The person applying could have been an individual or a contractor. The position was posted on our website and placed in the News Journal. NHA started the vetting process on December 28th and filled the position as quickly as possible. The position was filled on January 31, 2022. NHA welcomed Ricky Hill to our team.

#### **Housing Manager Position:**

Mrs. Pizzaro from New Castle County Housing Commission filled the housing manager's position as of January 24, 2021. Mrs. Pizzaro is currently in training for the Low-Income Public Housing Program.

The Vice-Chairperson asked what concerns the FHEO had regarding the disposition of the two properties proposed for sale.

The FHEO wanted clarification as to where the two families were being relocated; and, if it will increase both a minority and a poverty concentration level where the two families are being relocated. It is important that the two units proposed for sale do not trigger a fair housing issue once the two families are relocated. NHA provided the census tracking data to support the disposition of these two rentals.

The Vice-Chairperson asked if there were any other questions or comments relating to the staff report for January 2022. Since there were none, the Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the Staff Report. Commissioner Tillman made a motion to approve the Staff Report from January. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Brown.

Aye 5 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tillman, Mrs. Forman-Gaines and Ms. Lewis)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 5 to 0

#### IV. Committee Reports:

The Vice-Chairperson called for the report from the Policies, Procedures, and Compliance & Personnel Committee.

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

###### **(a). Personnel (Board Resolution 382 A&B)- Executive Session (Closed to the Public – Personnel) Executive Session meeting held at 4:40 PM on February 9<sup>th</sup> prior to the Regularly Scheduled Commissioner Meeting.**

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Commissioner Brown, was present for this meeting. He reported that an Executive Session Meeting was held prior to this meeting to discuss a personnel incentive for the Executive Director. Resolution 382B was approved. The Resolution needs to be properly executed.

The Vice-Chairperson called for the report from the Development Committee.

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

The Vice-Chairperson asked Ms. Jordan to provide the report for this committee.

###### **(a). Committee Update: George Reed Village II**

###### **(b). Resolution No. 410: Home Funds Request to New Castle County as a Funding Source for the Redevelopment**

###### **(a). Committee Update: George Reed Village II:**

###### **Application #DDA0011025 for the Proposed George Reed Village II:**

Progress and collaboration for the redevelopment of George Reed Village II is moving forward. As reported in previous months, the George Reed Village II redevelopment received \$500,000 in a bond request from the Delaware Legislature. LNWA and NHA requested the City of Newark to allow access to these funds (which was approved) to be reimbursed for pre-development expenses such as land use

requirements, engineering, and environmental assessments: just to name a few expenses relating to the pre-development cost.

LNWA and NHA are anticipating receiving \$4M in APRA funds as an additional funding source for George Reed Village since these funds are earmarked for affordable housing initiatives.

**Application #DDA0011618 Disposition of two Scattered Site Rental Properties:**

The application process for the disposition of two scattered site rental properties is in its final stage. We should have a written response within the next few days. Once NHA receives written approval, we will proceed with making the public aware that the properties are for sale. We will be responsible for relocating the families and assisting with housing. We will also need to hold Executive Session meetings to discuss the method we will use in accepting offers for the purchase of these rentals.

**(b). Resolution No. 410: Home Funds Request to New Castle County as a Funding Source for the Redevelopment**

LNWA and NHA will be applying for HOME Funds from New Castle County. The request is for \$500,000. The application is due on February 24, 2022. This application requires an approved Board Resolution.

Explanation of HOME Funds:

HOME Funds are awarded annually as formula grants to participating jurisdictions. The program's flexibility allows state and local governments to use HOME Funds for grants, direct loans or loan guarantees.

The nature of the program-Participating jurisdictions may use HOME Funds for a variety of housing activities according to local housing needs. Eligible use of funds includes tenant-based rental assistance, housing rehabilitation, assistance to home buyers and new construction of housing. The new construction of housing is the qualifier for NHA.

Commissioner Forman-Gaines commented that she thought the units were undergoing rehabilitation. Mrs. Jordan responded, "No, the proposed plans are for new construction."

Chairperson Lane asked, "What are these funds specifically being used for?" Mrs. Jordan will report the specific use of the request for these funds at the next board meeting.

The Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion to approve Resolution No. 410 authorizing the Newark Housing Authority to submit an application for consideration of HOME Funds to New Castle County Department of Community Services.

Chairperson Lane made a motion to accept the resolution. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Brown.

Aye 5 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tillman, Mrs. Forman-Gaines and Ms. Lewis)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 5 to 0

The Vice-Chairperson who is the Chairperson for this committee reported the following:

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

**(a) Committee Report: Monthly Financials**

**(b) Resolution No. 409: Approval of FYE 2023 Operating Budget**

**(a). Monthly Financials:**

Due to the assigned Accountant for NHA having been exposed to COVID-19 and under COVID protocol, there were no financial reports circulated for this meeting.

**(b). Resolution No. 409: Approval of FYE 2023 Operating Budget**

The Chairperson for this committee acknowledged that the budget presented last month is consistent with budgets from previous years. The Chairperson reported the FYE 2023 budget breakdown is as follows:

LIPH budget:	\$ 513,555
HCV:	\$ 729,067
CFP:	\$ 75,560
Business Activities:	\$ 33,333
Total Budget	\$1,351,515

She asked if there were any additional questions or comments related to the proposed budget for 2023. Since there was none, she asked for a motion to approve Resolution No. 409. Commissioner Forman-Gaines made a motion to approve the Resolution. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Tillman.

Aye 5 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tillman, Mrs. Forman-Gaines and Ms. Lewis)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 5 to 0

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

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Ms. Lane, was present. There was no report from this Committee.

**V. Attorney Issues:** None

**VI. Old Business:**

A. From the other Commissioners:

1. Discussion regarding “In Person BOC Meetings” – Tabled from previous month. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that we will tentatively plan to have in persons meetings in April with the approved social distancing and safety protocols in place. Mrs. Jordan will provide an

update as to if the community room at NHA's office is sufficient. As an alternative, the Chairperson, Ms. Lane, suggested that Mrs. Jordan look into the use of the community room at Alder Creek.

2. Discussion regarding Vaccinations (BOC, Staff, Vendors) – Tabled from previous months. Chairperson Lane acknowledged that Mrs. Jordan provided sufficient information on this topic last month and no other action is needed.

B. From the Executive Director: None

C. From Legal Counsel:

Mr. Gouge reported that we sought to evict a current tenant for lease violations and won all grievance hearings. A Justice of the Peace hearing was held, and the judge agreed with our decision. The participant filed an appeal which is her right to do. A trial de novo was scheduled. A trial de novo is a new case where parties present this case in front of a 3-panel judge. The judge who heard the case initially is not one of the judges to hear this case in the trial de novo. The parties have agreed to enter into a stipulated agreement. The tenant agreed to vacate the unit by March 31, 2021, and while occupying the unit the tenant must comply with all program requirements and the lease in place.

## **VII. New Business:**

A. From Commissioners: None

B. From the Executive Director:

1. Housing Authority Protocol in contacting staff, extended staff, contractors, and consultants. Mrs. Jordan provided the following:

NHA's protocol for Board of Commissioners contacting staff, extended staff, contractors, and consultants is as follow:

- a. Any request for information, questions, or inquiries regarding the business of the authority should be directed to the Executive Director.
- b. NHA's Executive Director will then contact the staff, extended staff, contractors, or consultant in an effort to acquire the requested information.
- c. Once the requested information is acquired by the Executive Director, it will then be disseminated to the requesting board members(s).
- d. The direct requesting of information, questions or inquires relating to the business of the authority is strongly discouraged by any commissioner.

The chairperson, Ms. Lane, commented, "A protocol is in place to avoid the possibility of unnecessary costs billed to the agency. "Time is Money" and we are streamlining having commissioners contact individuals to avoid unnecessary cost."

The Chairperson asked if any commissioner had any questions from the developer's presentation.

Commissioner Tillman commented that the Q&A provided after the presentation allowed for a lot of questions to be answered.

2. Commissioners were reminded to return forms provided in the Commissioners' Policy and Procedural Manual.

Commissioner Forman-Gaines responded she is probably on the list and will have the forms to NHA by Monday.

Commissioner Lewis asked if NHA had received her signed forms. Mrs. Jordan responded, "Yes."

3. Discussion regarding Landlord Outreach (SIP & Social Event or Virtual Invite)

Mrs. Jordan referred to the circulated flyer "Join our SIP & Social Event calling all landlords & property owners to join NHA in providing quality housing opportunities to those in need." Although a date and time is yet to be determined, a breakout discussion took place regarding some landlord incentives to encourage landlord participation.

Mrs. Jordan was concerned with the proposal of offering new landlords with a signing bonus and not offering it for existing landlords. She also mentioned a proposal of offering a slush fund to assist landlords with damages to their rental property once a participant moves out.

Commissioner Forman-Gaines thought it was a good idea of being pro-active with some landlord incentives.

Commissioner Brown suggested that we could acknowledge our existing landlords with a plaque while providing new landlords with a signing bonus.

Commissioner Tillman suggested three stages for a bonus.

- New Listing Bonus
- Loyalty Bonus
- Re-active Landlord Bonus (landlords who had previous property listed but removed the listing from the program)

Commissioner Tillman also suggested that we establish a set amount (that could build up over a period of time) to cover damages for our landlords.

Chairperson Lane was not in favor of providing existing landlords with any incentives. She stated that our focus is on new landlords and this is a marketing strategy with an incentive to increase our landlord participation. She suggested that we provide a gift card to Lowes or Home Depot as an acknowledgment of their long-time participation in our Section 8 Program. Regarding the Security Deposits, we could establish a "not to exceed" amount beyond the security deposit with a cap at

three (3) months in total and up to three (3) move outs per landlord for the life of their program participation.

Commissioner Brown asked if this was something that needed to be decided on today. Mrs. Jordan responded, "No."

Commissioner Forman-Gaines suggested that we contact other agencies to see what they have done so we do not have to re-create the wheel.

Mrs. Jordan responded, "Contact was made with the County." However, she will reach out to the State Housing Authority.

Mrs. Jordan also reported that HUD will be offering an HCV Landlord Engagement Webinar on February 17, 2022 and NHA is registered to attend. Hopefully, there are some take-aways from the webinar that will help in our decision making as to how best to incentivize and increase our landlord participation in Newark.

4. From Legal Counsel: None

The Vice-Chairperson asked if there were any other questions or comments. Commissioner Brown inquired into an article that referred to DC having a check-up.

Mrs. Jordan responded that perhaps the article is referring to physical inspections. However, HUD has announced that physical inspections will resume with FYE 3/31 housing authorities. NHA is one of those authorities, although we have not received our notice for when our units will be inspected. The percentage of units selected is not determined until the HUD contracted inspectors are onsite. We are in the process of notifying our residents that HUD will resume physical inspections. We are also planning to resume the physical inspections for the LIPH units in March. Our maintenance person will be going to training (for both programs) within the next few months.

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

The Vice-Chairperson asked our visitor if she had any questions or comments. She replied, "Not at this time."

**IX. Adjournment:**

The Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Brown made a motion for the meeting to adjourn. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Tillman.

Aye 5 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tillman, Mrs. Forman-Gaines and Ms. Lewis)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 5 to 0

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:59 PM**

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