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**Newark Housing Authority  
Board of Commissioners  
September 14, 2022**

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

**Opening:**

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order sharply at 5:01 PM by the Chairperson, Nikki Lane.

The Chairperson referenced welcoming two new board members who had not joined the meeting. Therefore, she moved on to Roll Call of the Commissioners present.

**I. Roll Call:**

The Chairperson made a request for Roll Call. Board of Commissioners present: Nikki Lane, Paul Tillman Emile Brown and Jerry Clifton. Marene Jordan (Executive Director) and Attorney Donald Gouge Jr. were also present.

Absent: Marguerite Ashely, Denise Gaines and Abeo Lucas.

**Note:**

On behalf of Commissioner Ashely, Mrs. Jordan mentioned that she (Ms. Ashley) has asked for a leave of absence due to medical reasons. She will continue with the administrative duties assigned by the Chairperson, if that is acceptable. She will notify the board in January of her decision as to her remaining a board member.

There were no objections to Commissioner Ashley's request.

The Chairperson asked that a member from the public (in attendance) to identify themselves for the record. Mahi Palanisami stated her name for the record.

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

**(a). Meeting Minutes from August 10, 2022.**

The Chairperson acknowledged that everyone should have received a copy of the meeting minutes from the August 10, 2022, meeting. She asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the minutes prior to asking for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Since there were no questions or comments, the Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the August 10th meeting. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Clifton.

Aye 4 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tillman and Mr. Clifton)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

**(b). Executive Session Meeting Minutes from August 10, 2022.**

The Chairperson asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the Executive Session Meeting Minutes from the August 10, 2022, meeting. Since there were no questions or comments, the Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

Commissioner Clifton made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the August 10th meeting. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tillman.

Aye 4 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tillman and Mr. Clifton)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

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

**(a). Staff Report from August 2022**

The Chairperson asked for the report of the Executive Director for the month of August 2022. Ms. Jordan provided the following report:

**Community Outreach:**

**University Undergraduate Research and Interview on Affordable Housing Participants:**

The Newark Housing Authority was contacted by Stephen Metraux, PhD, Director & Associate Professor of the Center for Community Research & Service from the Joseph R. Biden, Jr. School of Public Policy and Administration, University of Delaware. As you are aware, Mr. Metraux was one of the panelists regarding the Family Re-entry Pilot Program. The purpose of this contact was regarding a student he is working with who is putting together a senior thesis project centered around the “intersecting implications of housing and transportation insecurity in Delaware”. The student is looking to conduct phone or zoom interviews with 10 to 20 subsidized housing program participants about their experiences in accessing housing. Questions will also address main forms of transportation people use when living in subsidized housing and how securing housing and transportation differ within urban and suburban neighborhoods in Delaware. To those who participate in the interview, \$25 is being given in appreciation of their time. It has been made clear that the NHA is not responsible for information requested in the interview or the \$25 being provided for participation in the interview.

NHA is in the process of surveying program participants who have an interest in participating in the interviews.

**Financial Literacy Program:**

Our Mayor, Stu Markham, opened the lines of communication for the Newark Housing Authority to engage in a financial literacy program for our program participants with JP Morgan Chase Foundation. NHA is scheduled to meet with Jac Rivers in the coming weeks.

NHA met with Darrin J. Wilson, VP Community Manager of the Chase Building in Wilmington, DE, on August 12, 2022. He is interested in promoting ideas for financial literacy and home ownership. A follow-up zoom meeting is scheduled for September 9th.

**Council Meeting August 25, 2022:**

As a participant of the Newark Charrette, NHA was invited to the Joint City Community & Planning Commissioners Meeting held on August 25, 2022, via zoom, to provide input on the Draft Code Amendments. NHA provided the following comments to be read for the record at the meeting.

1. Encourage Affordable Housing for New Construction within the City Limits of Newark.
2. Offer a pilot program that offers financial incentives that are regulatory if developers become a Section 8 Landlord (e.g., waive rental permit fees, reduce fees associated with planning and development and prioritize approval timeframes).
3. Designate a percentage of new units built as affordable housing, or
4. Pay a fee in-lieu of, or
5. List property and lease to a Section 8 participant
6. Use funds paid into the housing fund kitty – Payment of fee in-lieu of
  - Use the kitty to help house families who fall below the 30% AMI.
  - Consider City owned Voucher program

In addition to the above recommendations, NHA's Board of Commissioners have considered providing the following incentives to encourage landlord participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

1. Landlord Signing Bonus
  - Upon listing a property in the program and executing a lease agreement, NHA may issue up to a \$1,000 welcome bonus.
2. Landlord Maintenance Subsidy
  - Money may be set aside for property repairs upon move-out or toward any tenant caused damages. This is in addition to the tenant paid security deposit.

**Fair Housing Task Force Update:**

Every year, all jurisdictions that receive federal housing funds from HUD as well as Public Housing authorities operating in those jurisdictions are required to report Fair Housing activity that occurred over the past year. NHA received a blank Fair Housing Plan – FY 2022 – Agency Activity Form requesting an update from DSHA who reports annually to HUD. NHA provided its update on the status of George Reed Village and staff training completed in March related to Fair Housing.

**Note:** *Commissioner Gaines joined the meeting at approximately 5:07 PM.*

**FYE 3/31/2022 Independent Audit:**

On August 15, 2022, NHA received a copy of the draft audit for FYE March 31, 2022. It is currently under final review of Senior Auditors at Barbacane Thornton & Company. Preliminary reports indicate no findings or inappropriate use of funds.

**HUD Approval of 5-year Action Plan work Items:**

On /August 18, 2022, NHA received notification from HUD of the eligible work items approved under NHA's 5-year action plan for the period covering 2022 – 2026 (board approved) in Capital Fund use. The funds have not been disbursed. NHA should receive \$251,888.

**CDBG Award:**

The Newark Housing Authority is waiting on a response from the City of Newark's Planning Department to confirm if our reallocation request is approved. NHA received \$62,565 in CDBG funds awarded under the 48th year (July 1, 2022 – June 2023) to help finance the demolition of the administration building clearing the way for the construction of Phase 1 – George Reed Village.

If the addendum request is approved, NHA will use these funds to rehab scattered site rental properties for improvements that will help improve the quality of living for our residents. NHA's addendum request must go to the Community Development/Revenue Advisory Committee for their review and recommendation to Council. The request is anticipated to be on the November's Council agenda.

NHA submitted its CDBG application request to the City of Newark's Planning Department on August 9, 2022, in consideration of receiving funds under the 49th year CDBG application for period July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024.

**Change in Administration Staffing:**

The Newark Housing Authority is currently operating under a modified maintenance agreement whereby numerous maintenance needs for units owned and managed by the authority are being resolved by referrals to outside contractors. Many onsite repairs/issues are being addressed as needed on an individual contractual basis by former maintenance personnel. We still have not acquired a steady maintenance person or contractor to fulfill our maintenance needs.

NHA is also advertising for a part-time Administrative Assistant to support the overall operations of the authority.

**New Section 8 Landlord Listing:**

The Newark Housing Authority was made aware of an existing landlord interested in listing a new rental: a 3-bedroom 1.5 bath unit into our Voucher Program. It is expected that the rental will be available for occupancy sometime in mid-November.

Being that NHA issued five (5) housing vouchers on August 25, 2022, to families approved to participate in the program, this new listing was made available to them.

NHA also contacted New Castle County to inquire into their ability to bill NHA instead of absorbing program participants that port into their jurisdiction. They continue to absorb.

Commissioner Clifton asked if the maintenance position was filled. Mrs. Jordan responded, “No.”

The Chairperson asked if there were any more questions or comments. Since there were none, she asked for a motion to approve the Staff Report. Commissioner Clifton made a motion to approve the Staff Report. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tillman.

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

**Note:** *Commissioner Lucas joined the meeting at approximately 5:26 PM.*

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

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

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

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Brown, was present for this committee update. However, there was no activity to report. Although there was no report, Mr. Brown mentioned the Annual Review of the Executive Director. He will be scheduling a meeting within the next few weeks.

The Chairperson called for the report from the Development Committee.

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

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

The Chairperson asked Mrs. Jordan to provide an update.

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

Development Update – Redevelopment of GRV:

Mrs. Jordan noted that the update will be given in Executive Session.

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

Mrs. Jordan noted that an update on the real estate transactions will be discussed in Executive Session.

The Chairperson asked if there were any additional questions or comments. Since there were none, the Chairperson called for the report from the Finance Committee.

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

**(a) Monthly Financials:**

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Ms. Ashley, was not present for this meeting. Mrs. Jordan provided the financial report for the period covering April 2022 – July 2022. Mrs. Jordan mentioned there were not any unusual expenses to report. She did refer to the Budget vs. Actual Report Income section, BLI 3692.70 CFP Income Operations of \$26,662.53. Mrs. Jordan mentioned this income was obligated and needed to be drawn down to close-out the grant. CFP 2018 is fully obligated and expended.

Chairperson Lane acknowledged that the percent column was added to the reports.

Commissioner Tillman commented there are a few items that are severely over budget. Those are landscaping & plumbing and electrical contracts. He asked if this was because we do not have a maintenance person who would normally take care of these items. Mrs. Jordan confirmed that to be the reason.

The Chairperson asked if there were any additional questions or comments. Since there were none, she called for the report from the Strategic Planning Committee.

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

The Chairperson of the board who is the Chairperson for this committee was present. However, there was no report from this committee.

The Chairperson moved on to the next agenda item.

**V. Attorney Issues:**

Mr. Gouge had no attorney issues to report but will provide a report later in the meeting.

**VI. Old Business:**

- A. From the other Commissioners: None
- B. From the Executive Director: None
- C. From Legal Counsel: Mr. Gouge reported that we received possession of a unit for non-payment of rent (Routine business of the authority).

**VII. New Business:**

- A. From Commissioners: Commissioner Gaines
  - a). Delaware Association Realtors provided her with a funding opportunity for local partners to provide direct service grants for Home Ownership for minorities. Commissioner Gaines inquired into if anyone knew of any partners/non-profits who she could forward the email to. Several recommendations were given with Commissioner Gaines indicating that she would circulate the email to everyone in attendance to receive additional feedback.
  - b). Commissioner Gaines reported she will be resigning from the Newark Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners due to her moving to Middletown, DE. She expressed her gratitude for working with a great group.
- B. From the Executive Director: None
- C. From Legal Counsel: Mr. Gouge reported filing two additional court cases for non-payment of rent.

**VIII. Executive Session (Closed to the Public):**

**A. Update on Contract Negotiations of a Real Estate Transaction.**

**B. Status of Contract Negotiations with LNWA.**

The Chairperson asked for a motion to enter Executive Session. Commissioner Clifton made a motion to drop down into Executive Session. This motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Brown.

At approximately 5:27 PM the Board of Commissioners entered Executive Session to discuss a real estate transaction.

Aye 6 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tillman, Mr. Clifton, Mrs. Gaines, and Ms. Lucas)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 6 to 0

At approximately 5:50 PM the Board of Commissioners came out of Executive Session. The Chairperson asked for a motion for the meeting to become public. Commissioner Gaines made a motion for the meeting to be open to the public. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Brown.

Aye 6 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tillman, Mr. Clifton, Mrs. Gaines, and Ms. Lucas)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 6 to 0

Commissioner Clifton reported an Executive Session was held to discuss a property issue and to seek advice from the attorney on the sale of a property. No action needs to be taken.

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

The Chairperson opened the floor to visitors. No visitors were present at the time the meeting was made public again.

**XI. Adjournment:**

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

Aye 6 (Ms. Lane, Mr. Brown, Mr. Tillman, Mr. Clifton, Mrs. Gaines, and Ms. Lucas)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 6 to 0

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

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

APPROVED