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**Newark Housing Authority  
Board of Commissioners  
January 11, 2023**

**Summary of Meeting (In- Person) Minutes; Alder Creek Community Room**

**Opening:**

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at approximately 5:00 PM by the Chairperson, Nikki Lane.

**I. Roll Call:**

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

Absent: Marguerite Ashely (excused absence)

**Note:**

- One Board Seat Vacant - Former Commissioner; Forman-Gaines; Mayoral appointment
- One Board Seat Approaching Expiration; Commissioner Tillman; expressed interest in accepting another 3-year term: Mayoral appointment.
- One Board Seat Vacant as of March 31, 2023, Commissioner Ashley; Mayoral appointment

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

None

**III. Approval of Minutes:**

**(a) Meeting Minutes from December 14, 2022**

The Chairperson 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 Clifton made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from December. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Tillman.

Aye 4 (Brown, Tillman, Clifton, and Lucas)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

**(b). Executive Session Meeting Minutes from December 14, 2022**

No action taken on these meeting minutes – Tabled.

**(c). Executive Session Meeting Minutes from September 14, 2022.**

No action taken on these meeting minutes – Tabled.

**Commissioner Clifton asked attorney Gouge if it was necessary to approve Executive Session meeting minutes.**

Attorney Gouge responded that it's a good practice to have in place. However, from a legal standpoint, he responded that he does not know the answer to that question.

**IV. Report of the Executive Director:  
(a). Staff Report December 2022**

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

**Energize Delaware Empowerment Grant:**

NHA is working directly with representatives from the Energize Delaware Empowerment Grant to receive funds available to convert units from oil heating sources to electric heat pumps in four of its units on Madison Drive. The application is due on January 6, 2023.

**Delaware State Housing Authority Announces Tenant Rent Reporting Pilot Program:**

All five housing authorities in Delaware collaborated in a joint effort of supporting the launching of the Delaware Tenant Reporting Pilot Program in partnership with Neighbor Good Partners (formerly NCALL) and Self Financial, Inc. This program is designed to build participants' credit by reporting on-time rental payments to Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. On-time utility payments are also to be reported to TransUnion. Participation is 100% free and voluntary.

**Delaware State Housing Authority DEHAP Rental Assistance Program:**

DSHA will cease accepting new applications for DEHAP rental assistance as of Monday, January 2, 2023. After serving close to 22,000 Delawareans as they recovered from the COVID-19 Pandemic, DSHA will close the program to new applications. Several of NHA's program participants received assistance with back rent and unpaid utilities during the initial phase of the program.

**Newark Area Welfare Committee:**

NHA was made aware of one of its Housing Choice Voucher program participants who was delinquent in rent and reached out to the Newark Area Welfare Committee who was able to assist with the back rent owed. The tenant is able to remain in his apartment.

**Harvard Kennedy School's Technical Assistance:**

The NHA is attending a meeting with Director Young from DSHA to discuss the Harvard Kennedy School's Government Performance Lab offering 12 months of pro bono technical assistance (TA). This assistance is being offered to help with homelessness prevention and rehousing initiatives. Our application made it to the next round of consideration. The next step is a phone interview with the State and the County. In the meantime, NHA and Dover **Housing Authority** submitted a joint letter of support for this initiative.

**Victoria Mews Apartments:**

NHA learned that Victoria Mews Apartments was sold and is currently under new management. It is our understanding that the new owners will continue to accept our Housing Choice Vouchers.

**Audited Financials FYE 3/31/2022:**

On December 5, 2022, NHA was notified of its audited financials as having been accepted by HUD.

**CDBG Update:**

NHA received written confirmation following the December 12th City Council Meeting, that the City of Newark awarded NHA, through the CDBG program, \$53,820 for the redevelopment of George Reed Village. At that same meeting, the Council approved NHA's request to reallocate \$62,565 originally approved to assist with demolition of the existing NHA offices at 313 E. Main Street. These funds will now be used to continue to make capital improvements to scattered site rentals owned and managed by NHA.

**Issuance of Housing Choice Vouchers:**

With the onset of a new year, NHA anticipates inviting families on the Housing Choice Voucher Program waiting list in an attempt to improve our utilization rate. NHA will begin conversations with the surrounding agencies to inquire if billing is an option instead of absorbing program participants who port out of our jurisdiction.

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

NHA anticipates the Board of Commissioners will select a developer partner for the George Reed redevelopment so negotiations can begin.

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

NHA was informed that the family remaining in the scattered site rental property (39 West Cleveland Ave.) which is proposed for sale is expected to be leased-up by February 1, 2023.

The Chairperson asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the Staff Report.

Commissioner Tillman inquired about staff positions.

Mrs. Jordan responded we have a part-time employee for clerical assistance. We have an interview scheduled for the Housing Manager's position next week. As far as maintenance is concerned, we are still outsourcing our maintenance needs.

The Chairperson asked if there were any events planned for our residents.

Mrs. Jordan responded that NHA did not have any specific plans at present. She mentioned that we are usually contacted by the Newark Arts Alliance who offer arts and crafts and summer camps for our residents' children who express an interest in those activities. We are awaiting their notifications. However, we do budget for such activities.

Mrs. Jordan's Administrative Assistant Greg Baldwin mentioned speaking with officer Saunders from the City of Newark Police Department regarding the Toys-for-Tots program. We learned that the military now

manages the program and families who are interested in receiving gifts must register online for this event. Mr. Baldwin acknowledged that we did not learn of the change until late in the year and unfortunately there was not enough time to notify the families of the change.

The Chairperson referenced Dicky Park Summer Camp being held at Alder Creek. She inquired as to whether NHA was aware of this. Mrs. Jordan responded that our office was not aware.

Mr. Baldwin commented that we often have our tenants sign up for events, but they do not attend. We have had families sign up to receive free arts and craft supplies, but they fail to pick them up. We also had families sign up for a free shoe initiative sponsored by the NAWC. We had shoes left over because many program participants did not pick them up, so we contacted other families in need. We have also received information on scholarship grants, and we forwarded that information on to eligible families. The family's correspondence to these is directly with the agency offering the scholarships or online.

Mrs. Jordan added that the Newark Arts Alliance scheduled an Arts and Craft event here at Alder Creek. Residents signed up and very few showed up.

The Chairperson commented, "That's unfortunate." She mentioned that transportation may be an issue for the children interested in the summer camp sponsored by Dicky Park and thought maybe UD can provide the transportation.

Commissioner Lucas commented that she tries to register her children online for events. There are resources that are offered to the community outside of what is provided by NHA. There are not a lot of people taking advantage of these resources. She mentioned online registration could be a problem along with transportation.

Commissioner Clifton suggested attending a council meeting and expressing our concerns regarding the above during the public comment period.

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

## **V. 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): (a). Annual Review of the Executive Director**

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Brown, was present for this meeting. There was no report requiring action from this committee.

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 a report from the Development Committee. Mrs. Jordan referred to the agenda item:

**(a). Board of Commissioner vote of Developer Partner for George Reed Village.**

The Chairperson asked Mrs. Jordan to provide a brief overview of who were the responders to the RFQ. Mrs. Jordan stated, “We had two responders, Michaels and Ingerman. As our consultants presented last month, both responders can deliver the product. There are pros and cons with each of them. The selection should be based on with whom you are most comfortable.”

Mrs. Jordan mentioned the Ingerman Group is the developer that was selected for Alder Creek. We are currently occupying the community space for our meeting today because of that partnership. Regarding Michaels, they have partnered with housing authorities in DE and the references were favorable.

Mrs. Jordan asked if each commissioner could be afforded the opportunity to express their views and then vote on their selection as to with whom we should partner. After a brief discussion, the final board tally was as follows:

Commissioner Clifton: “If I remember correctly, Michaels proposed more units in their proposal and offered a two-tiered redevelopment phase. However, we have previous experience with Ingerman. My recommendation would be for the board to approve Michaels.”

Commissioner Tillman: “I like Ingerman. A two-tiered redevelopment presents more of a financial challenge from one phase to the other. I think a one phased project is less of a financial challenge.”

Commissioner Brown: “I like Michaels. I prefer the two phases which present less of a challenge for relocation. However, Ingerman was his final recommendation.”

Commissioner Lucas: “I like Ingerman.”

Chairperson Lane: ““I was in favor of Ingerman. However, it’s contingent upon NHA remaining the property manager.”

Mrs. Jordan concurred with Chairperson Lane’s contingency on management. The board also discussed having a third-party inspector selected by NHA. The reason is to conduct ongoing inspections throughout the construction period consistent with the current code to prevent some of the complaints from residents regarding maintenance issues that have existed at Alder Creek. With these contingencies in place, the

chairperson asked for a motion to proceed with negotiations with Ingerman. Commissioner Tillman made a motion to proceed with Ingerman. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Brown. Commissioner Clifton was opposed to this motion.

Aye 4 (Lane, Brown, Tillman and Lucas)  
Nay 1 (Clifton)  
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 1

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 asked if there were any questions, comments or concerns regarding the financials reported for this meeting. She mentioned that we currently have a net income of approximately \$23,172 and expenses are less than our income for this reporting period. There were no questions but comments relating to the reports look good. Mrs. Jordan proceeded with the next agenda item from this committee.

#### **(b). Introduce FYE 2023 – 2024 Operating Budget:**

Mrs. Jordan referred to the proposed budget for FYE 2024. The total housing authority budget (LIPH and HCV) totals \$1.3M. The budget is based on actual and projected expenditures and revenues respectively. She referenced that key points within the LIPH budget of \$523,217 were as follows:

- We anticipate the capital fund operating transfer for FYE 2024 to be \$103,274 or increased by approximately \$60,000 as compared to the fiscal year. COVID funding in prior years were used for costs traditionally absorbed by operating cost of the capital fund.
- Management fees earned from Alder Creek are anticipated to increase by \$5K. As the subsidy for Alder Creek increases, NHA management fee increases accordingly.
- Administrative costs increased by approximately \$45K. The increase is from NHA budgeting for all positions at a full-time rate and a moderate 3% increase for most operating costs.
- Extraordinary expenses are budgeted at \$26K and will be used to offset the cost of energy improvements identified in a recent Energize Delaware Grant applied for by NHA. The cost identified in the grant is in excess of \$110K and the maximum grant award is \$75K.

For the HCV budget.

- We are forecasting a budget of \$697,519 with revenues for HAP estimated to be \$620,000 (strictly for landlords) and Admin Fees to be \$76,957 respectively.

Mrs. Jordan stated, “No vote is needed today. The proposed budget is being introduced today with the expectation of it being approved at the February meeting affording everyone time to review and have questions next month.”

The Chairperson moved on to the report from the Strategic Planning Committee.

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

The Chairperson of the board is the Chairperson for this committee and was present. There was no report requiring action from this committee.

The Chairperson moved on to the next agenda item.

**VI. Attorney Issues:**

Attorney Gouge had no attorney issues to report.

**VII. Old Business:**

- A. From the other Commissioners: None
- B. From the Executive Director: None
- C. From Legal Counsel:
  - (a). Board Vacancy – Attorney Gouge reported that we have board vacancies, therefore, it is important for board members to attend meetings to ensure we have quorums for meetings.

**VIII. New Business:**

- A. From Commissioners: None
- B. From the Executive Director:
  - a). Nomination of Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners  
Tabled, No Action Taken
  - b). Nomination of Chairperson of the Finance Committee  
Tabled, No Action Taken

A brief discussion took place regarding the administrative duties required of a commissioner. The board agreed to have Commissioner Ashely continue with the administrative duties for NHA through March 31, 2023.

- C. From Legal Counsel:

Attorney Gouge also reported that we received judgment and possession of a unit for non-payment of rent. He mentioned that he will be filing a debt action claim against this former tenant.

Attorney Gouge reported we submitted an insurance claim for one of our scattered site rental properties where damage was caused by a frozen pipe breaking, causing damage to the adjacent property. The private owner was informed to contact his insurance company to handle his claim and then attempt subrogation against us.

**IX. Executive Session (Closed to the Public) Discussion regarding a Real Estate Transaction.**

The Chairperson asked for a motion to enter Executive Session. Commissioner Clifton made a motion to drop down into Executive Session. This motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tillman.

At approximately 6:08 PM the Board of Commissioners entered Executive Session.

Aye 4 (Brown, Tillman, Clifton, and Lucas)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

At approximately 6:15 PM the Board of Commissioners came out of Executive Session. The Chairperson asked for a motion for the meeting to become public. Commissioner Tillman made a motion for the meeting to be open to the public. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Clifton.

Aye 4 (Brown, Tillman, Clifton, and Lucas)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

The Commissioner Clifton acknowledged an Executive Session was held to discuss proceeding with a contract for a real estate transaction.

The Chairperson asked for a motion to have attorney Gouge execute a contract for the sale of property discussed. Commissioner Clifton made a motion to proceed with a real estate transaction. This motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tillman.

**X. Adjournment:**

The Chairperson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The Chairperson made a motion for the meeting to adjourn. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Clifton.

Aye 4 (Brown, Tillman, Clifton, and Lucas)  
Nay 0  
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:21 PM  
Minutes Submitted by: Marene M. Jordan, Executive Director