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**Newark Housing Authority  
Board of Commissioners  
June 14, 2023**

**Summary of Meeting (In-Person Meeting) Minutes**

**Opening:**

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at approximately 5:03 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 Keith Moone Sr. Marene Jordan (Executive Director) and Attorney Donald Gouge Jr. were also present.

Absent Commissioners: Abeo Lucas and Kelly Tompkins

The Chairperson acknowledged that we had a visitor. She asked the visitor if they would state their name and address for the record.

Resident Ellen Pollack of 15A Independence Circle acknowledged her presence. She mentioned wanting to simply listen to what was being discussed.

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

The Chairperson acknowledged that our visitor from Fulton Bank, John Hassiepen, had not arrived. She tabled this agenda item until he arrived and then moved on to the next agenda item.

**III. Approval of Minutes:**

**(a). Meeting Minutes from May 10, 2023**

The Chairperson asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the minutes. Since there were none, she asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from May 10, 2023. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Clifton.

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

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

**(a). Staff Report from May 2023**

The Chairperson asked for the report of the Executive Director for the month of May. Before Ms. Jordan provided the Staff Report for May, she acknowledged that Vice-Chairperson Tillman attended the Council Meeting on May 22, 2023, in her absence. Ms. Jordan and the Chairperson thanked him for his attendance. Ms. Jordan provided the following in presenting the Staff Report for May.

**WHA and New Castle County Expanded the Boundaries of the Voucher Program Through the MOU Signing by Including the Newark Housing Authority.**

The Newark Housing Authority was present for the signing of the Interagency Port Pilot Agreement extended from the New Castle County Housing Authority and the Wilmington Housing Authority held on May 24, 2023, at the Hope Center in New Castle County. The event was scheduled from 1:00 PM to 1:30 PM. The agenda included:

- Welcome remarks from Lisa Oglesby, Managing Director of the Hope Center
- Remarks from Matt Meyer, New Castle County Executive
- Remarks from Matt Heckles, Region 3 Administrator from HUD
- Remarks from Ray Fitzgerald, Executive Director WHA
- Remarks from Marene Jordan, Executive Director NHA

Commissioners present for the event were:

- Board Chairperson, Nikki Lane
- Board Vice-Chairperson, Paul Tillman
- Chairperson of the Policy and Procedure committee, Emile Brown

In a brief statement during the MOU signing, Ms. Jordan stated the following:

“The inclusion of the Newark Housing Authority in the port pilot agreements means that although small, we are on the move with big ideas. With the signing of the MOU, we look forward to the opportunity of our agencies working closer together in expanding the boundaries of our current programs, which will benefit all agencies and current and future program participants.

We can now provide our voucher holders with the opportunity to look for and possibly choose a unit in either of the three jurisdictions.

As you may know, it has been challenging for many years for our voucher holders to find affordable housing opportunities in the City of Newark area due to the competition for housing that exists with the University of Delaware students. Now we can tell our Section 8 Voucher holders that they are not limited to simply searching within the jurisdiction of NHA.

We no longer have to tell our voucher holders from NHA who think they have found the perfect unit with a Wilmington, New Castle, Bear or Middletown address, “Sorry, that is not in our jurisdiction.” But instead, we can say, “Bring us the completed RTA and we’ll get the process rolling.”

This partnership provides greater flexibility, a more modified and easier process for program participants, landlords and staff.”

Matt Meyer, New Castle County Executive, shared that since the implementation of the port pilot program, there are approximately 20 families who have leased up under the MOU.

**HUD Roundtable Discussion with All Five PHAs to Discuss a Centralized Waiting List:**

HUD Regional Administrator, Matt Heckles, called this meeting among all five housing authorities to discuss a centralized waiting list. In summary, all housing authorities agreed to meet again to see how the implementation and merging of existing waiting lists works with another housing authority. In theory, the list would remain open allowing an applicant to choose what housing authority they want to apply to. A further discussion is needed as to who would manage the list, who would pull from the list when needed and how existing preferences would be ranked. If all PHA's agree, the Housing Choice Voucher waiting list would be the test for implementation of a centralized waiting list. All PHAs would need to amend their Administrative Plans for the Voucher Program to include a significant amendment to the Voucher Program and the completion of a public hearing. A follow-up meeting is planned.

**NAHRO 2023 National Conference:**

NAHRO has released the schedule for the 2023 National Conference. This year the conference & exhibit will be held in New Orleans, LA. The dates for the conference will be October 6th – October 8th. If any commissioner would like to attend the conference, please let Ms. Jordan know.

**High Performer of Capital Funds for FY 2023:**

The Newark Housing Authority is ranked a high performer for FY 2023 Capital Funds allocation. Although the funding amount is unknown at this time, NHA should receive a bonus for being ranked as such.

**Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) Report for FYE 3/31/2022:**

The Newark Housing Authority received notification on Thursday, May 25, 2023, of our ranking of NHA as a high performer. There are four indicators of how the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ranks and scores a PHA.

<b>PHAS Indicators</b>	<b>Maximum Score</b>	<b>Net Score</b>
Physical Inspections	40	34
Financial	25	25
Management	25	24
Capital Fund Use	10	10
<b>PHAS Total Score</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Designated Status</b>	<b>High Performer</b>	

**Unaudited Financial FYE 3/31/2023:**

The Newark Housing Authority submitted its unaudited financials electronically to HUD, meeting the deadline of May 31, 2023. The financials are under review pending approval.

**Audited Financials FYE 3/31/2023:**

The Newark Housing Authority's audited financials will commence on June 20, 2023, lasting for approximately 2 weeks. The audited financials are due to HUD by December 31, 2023.

**Fulton Bank Update:**

As requested by the Board of Commissioners, John Hassiepen, Vice President – Relationship Manager for Fulton Bank provided a written assessment for consideration of the conversion of our existing accounts into Government or Money Market Accounts. This agenda item was tabled until his arrival.

In preparation for the Fulton Bank follow-up, Ms. Jordan provided the Board with a list of CDs, their values, interest rates and maturity dates. The current highest interest rate is 2.25% while Fulton Bank has agreed to offer 3% for all current CDs.

The fee accountant had recommended previously that we try and get a higher interest rate, given the value of each of the CDs and its overall cash value.

Commissioner Brown asked if we contacted any other banks to inquire about their rates. Ms. Jordan responded, "No. That would become a procurement issue." She added that is why the fee accountant mentioned at the last meeting Fulton Bank contacted NHA avoiding any initial contact from NHA. At this time, John Hassiepen had not arrived, so this discussion was tabled.

**HOTMA Final Rule:**

Ms. Jordan informed the Commissioners of HOTMA Final Rule (Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act). This rule will require NHA to update its policies for the programs administered by NHA to comply with this final rule. She reported that NHA attended a webinar hosted by Nan McKay to get an overview of what changes are being implemented. She is working on those changes and will provide a list to the board for their review and approval within the next few months. All changes will require a public comment period and hearing. She advised that NHA usually begins our Annual Plan process inclusive of any policy changes in November. The changes are effective January 2024.

Ms. Jordan added, "There will be some changes in the inspection protocol for both programs as well."

The Chairperson opened the floor for any question from the commissioners.

Commissioner Clifton asked, "What makes up the Physical Inspections category when being evaluated by HUD?"

Ms. Jordan responded, “HUD schedules and inspects a sample of units/common areas/grounds of properties owned and managed by a PHA. How often is determined and based on the PHA’s previous inspected score. Each dwelling unit must be habitable and in good repair. All areas and aspects of the dwelling unit are inspected (for example, the unit’s bathroom, ceilings, doors, electrical outlets, smoke detectors, walls, and windows, appliances) must be free of health and safety hazards, functionally adequate, operable, and in good repair.”

Commissioner Clifton commented that he didn’t think that it was fair to be held accountable for tenant’s not reporting maintenance that could impact this category.

Ms. Jordan commented, “That is why we provide advance notice(s) to the tenant to help them prep for these inspections. Some tenants report repairs and some don’t. However, once the HUD inspector reports the deficiency based on the onsite physical inspection, if the deficiency is determined to be beyond normal wear and tear, the cost of the repair is deferred to the tenant.”

Commissioner Brown asked if Commissioners attended NAHRO conferences in the past.

Ms. Jordan responded, “Yes, this is a great way to interact with other Commissioners and learn other issues or success stories of an agency through policies set by Commissioners from other agencies.”

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 minutes. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Clifton.

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

## **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):**

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

The Chairperson called for the report from the Development Committee.

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

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

Ms. Jordan provided the following as an update for this sub-committee. She called everyone's attention to the renderings and floor plans for the proposed redevelopment of George Reed Village. She referred to the floor plans for the 2-bedroom unit. At the April meeting, it was suggested that a modification to this floor plan be made to include a ½ bath. The floor plan was modified as such but the ½ bath is located off the great room. As an alternative, it was discussed as to relocating the ½ bathroom somewhere else. However, given the existing floor plan, moving the ½ bath would mean losing the kitchen pantry or washer and dryer.

Since there was a resident in attendance, the Chairperson asked her for her opinion. Commissioner Moone assisted her in reviewing the floor plans. Ms. Pollack did not like the location of having the ½ bath off the great room area or anywhere in the kitchen. She liked the idea of having her own washer and dryer. She suggested that instead of a ½ bath making the main bathroom larger.

As for the exterior of the buildings, Ms. Jordan informed, "That is still in the planning stages". There was a brief discussion regarding access to the units for the families. A question was asked as to how many units there would be in each building. Ms. Jordan stated that the family units will mirror the units ("the flats") at Alder Creek.

The Chairperson asked if any commissioners were interested in touring a unit at Alder Creek to get a better understanding of the proposed floor plan for George Reed Village. The commissioners present agreed that it would be a good idea to do so. The Chairperson asked Ms. Jordan to coordinate a tour with the Ingerman Group and notify the commissioners of a date and time.

Commissioner Brown raised a concern of insufficient lighting at Alder Creek. He mentioned how we had held a board meeting there and when exiting the community center at the end of the meeting, the area was very dark. He asked that the site plan include ample and improved exterior lighting throughout the site.

Ms. Jordan added, "Based on the conversations with members from the development team and the City of Newark Public Works, we are going to need to provide an access onto Main Street for emergencies in addition to access off of Tyre Avenue. DelDOT believes this project is eligible for their expedited review process but requested documentation from the city to clarify."

Ms. Jordan reminded the board of our submission for the LIHTC 9% award. The state should announce the awards in early July.

**Application #DDA0011618 Section 18 Disposition Application to Sell Two Scattered Site Rentals:**  
Attorney Gouge will provide an update.

### **C. Report of Finance Committee – Chairperson (Mr. Tillman):**

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

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Tillman, was present at this meeting. Paul mentioned that we have a full year of financial reports. He stated, “There were some adjustments which are reflected in the reports. We are in good shape not in the red and not significantly in the black. If you were to review February’s financial results you will see a big difference in what the net income was then and what is being reported at the end of the fiscal year.” He mentioned that Ms. Jordan had provided him with a summary of adjustment(s) that were made (revenue vs. expenses) and any follow-up questions he had were answered by Ms. Jordan prior to the meeting. This provided a better understanding of the summary of adjustments and why they were needed. He stated that he was comfortable with the answers she provided.

Commissioner Clifton asked if this is a running budget.

Vice-Chairperson Tillman responded, “The budget is fixed for a 12-month period.”

Commissioner Brown mentioned that maintenance contracts are up referring to the budget vs. actual report for FYE March 31, 2023.

Vice-Chairperson Tillman reminded the board that we are still without a staff maintenance person, so contracts are higher to offset that budget line item.

**The Chairperson called for the report from the Strategic Planning Committee.**

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

There was no report from this committee

### **VI. Attorney Issues:**

There were 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). Barksdale Property Sale Update: Attorney Gouge reported having to follow up with all parties involved to possibly prepare a letter of intent. He will have more details to report at the next meeting.

b). 37 & 39 West Cleveland Update: Attorney Gouge reported that settlement took place on May 25, 2023. It was a straightforward sale. There was a minor adjustment on the settlement sheet for utilities that were outstanding but other than that settlement went well.

Ms. Jordan added the proceeds from the sale were deposited in a 9-month CD.

**VIII. New Business:**

- A. From Commissioners: None
- B. From the Executive Director: None
- C. From Legal Counsel:  
Attorney Gouge reported having filed court for non-payment of rent.

**IX. Adjournment:**

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

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:10 PM**

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

APPROVED