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**Newark Housing Authority
Board of Commissioners
February 14, 2024**

Summary of Meeting (Virtual) Minutes

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at approximately 5:00 PM by the Vice-Chairperson, Paul Tillman.

I. Roll Call:

The Vice-Chairperson made a request for Roll Call. Board of Commissioners present: Paul Tillman, Kelly Tompkins, Emile Brown, Keith Moone Sr, and Abeo Lucas. Marene Jordan (Executive Director) and Attorney Donald Gouge Jr. were also present.

Absent Commissioners: Chairperson, Nikki Lane. Chairperson Lane was present for the Executive Session held prior to this meeting.

Note: One Board Member Vacancy – Governor Appointment

II. Visitors and/or Petition:

The Vice-Chairperson acknowledged our visitor and asked them to identify themselves for the record.

Ellen Pollack of 7A Independence Circle (senior resident) identified herself for the record. Ms. Pollack mentioned she was attending to listen.

The Vice-Chairperson offered our visitor a few minutes to address the board with any questions or concerns she may have. If any.

Ms. Pollack shared her experience while using the Newark Connect Service. The Newark Connect is an all-new transportation system for residents in the community. She mentioned the service is much better than the paratransit, but the service does not work on the weekend. While it works for her, more people need to use it. She knows the university students use it, but she is trying to get our residents from Independence and Delaware Circle to use it. Overall, she gave the Newark Connect Service a rating of “B” for its services so far.

Vice-Chairperson encouraged Ms. Pollack to continue to encourage the residents to use this service so the service can continue.

III. Approval of Minutes:

(a). Meeting Minutes from January 10, 2024

The Vice-Chairperson acknowledged that the meeting minutes for January 10, 2024, were circulated and received and that everyone had time to review them. He asked if there were any questions regarding the meeting minutes. Since there were none, he asked for a motion to approve those meeting minutes. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was 2nd by Commissioners Moone and Tompkins.

Aye 4 (Brown, Tompkins, Lucas and Moone)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

IV. Report of the Executive Director:

(a). Staff Report from January 2024

The Vice-Chairperson asked for the report of the Executive Director. Mrs. Jordan proceeded with the following report:

City of Newark Planning Commission Meeting:

NHA and Commissioner Tillman attended the Planning Commission Meeting on January 2, 2024. There were a lot of concerns regarding the playground, specifically its location. This was the focal point of the commissioners. There were other observations, opinions, and comments but the project was supported by a 5 to 1 vote to recommend to city council for approval.

Relaunch of Family Re-entry Program continued:

The highlight for this initiative is that we have made great progress towards relaunching the FRP for 2024 including creating an updated operations plan, governance structure, communications materials, and data & evaluation plan. The FRP coordinator is the last piece. The coordinator is essential to the success of the program, and we are still figuring out who will fill that role and when the coordinator will be in place. Status is pending.

Admin Position Advertised:

Interviews for the Administrative Assistant position is complete with the hiring of a new Admin. The new employee (Tracey Bennett) start date was moved to February 20, 2024. This will be a full-time position.

Centralized Waiting List continued:

All five PHAs were represented in the HUD onsite meeting held on January 30, 2024, at the Hope Center to discuss continued progress being made to adopt a statewide centralized waiting list. The meeting allowed for a roundtable discussion with HUD representative(s) participating in the meeting. Topics discussed:

- Nonprofit setup
- Confirmation of each PHA receiving board approval via resolution
- Admin Plans alignment (waiting list, selection process, preferences etc.)
- MOU
- Cost Estimate for each PHA

Later in the meeting, the meeting was joined by Mass. NAHRO to share any lessons learned and to share successes in all PHA's (120) participating in the centralized waiting list. The next step is to establish the nonprofit, create an RFP for interested parties to respond to in the role of the administrator and then the MOU signing.

Mrs. Jordan referred to the price quote to show financial contributions for each housing authority based on size of agency.

Streamlining the Housing Choice Voucher process:

Representatives from each PHA were interviewed to provide information on how administering an HCV program works in each of their respective jurisdictions. Key points:

- Landlord outreach
- Process for a landlord to list their property in the program.
- Inspection process/turnaround time
- Payment Standards

A request was made for each PHA to start open dialog to align polices. Next meeting is pending.

Alder Creek update:

As a follow-up to our last conversation (board Meeting) regarding management at Alder Creek, attorney Gouge sent a letter to the Management team and a response was received. Since, all late recerts were completed and submitted electronically to HUD.

DE NAHRO:

NHA will be registering to attend the Fair Housing Training sponsored by DE NAHRO. The training will be held through a live webinar in March 2024. All staff will be participating in the training. Upon completion a certificate will be issued.

Request for Reimbursement of Predevelopment Expenses for GRV:

Ingerman, our developer partner, submitted another reimbursement request to the City of Newark for predevelopment expenses. Expenses included architecture, city of Newark public works, attorney, new ecology, and internal cost. Total expenses are \$121,597. Once payment is processed, the remaining balance will be \$297,270 in bond funds.

DelDot Subdivision:

NHA received notification that the GRV subdivision plan review is complete and has been accepted by DelDot. We can expect approval determination or further direction by February 2, 2024.

ARPA Funds Quarterly Reporting:

NHA submitted its quarterly report for the period ending December 31, 2023, on January 11, 2024. There was no reported activity.

FY March 31, 2023, Audited Financials:

NHA received notification from HUD that our FYE audited financial statements were approved.

SEMAP Quarterly Reporting:

NHA submitted its quarterly report of the SEMAP Corrective Action Plan update on January 3, 2023. The field office responded on January 10, 2024, with the authority continuing to address indicator #13 by increasing their spending and issuing more vouchers. The authority is on track to spend all its funding by the end of CY 2023.

Relocation for GRV Phase I:

The seniors that occupy units in buildings scheduled to be demolished during Phase I and need to relocate are finding alternative housing with the assistance of NHA and collaboration with landlords. We have another senior who received approval to lease-up at Victoria Mews. Another landlord has notified NHA of a vacancy that will be ready in April. He is willing to lease it to one of our seniors leaving only five seniors needing offsite housing.

CDBG Funds Reallocation Request 49th Year:

NHA's request to re-allocate these funds was not approved. Apparently, because the moves are temporary, the funds cannot be used for relocation. However, I did confirm the funds can be used to continue to make capital improvements to our scattered sites. As an alternative funding source for relocation, NHA will use capital funds to pay for relocation. For grant CFP 2022, NHA reserved \$95,000.

The Vice-Chairperson asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the Staff Report. There were none. He asked for a motion to approve the report. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the Staff Report for January. The motion was 2nd by Commissioners Moone and Tompkins.

Aye 4 (Brown, Tompkins, Lucas and Moone)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

Continuing with the Staff Report for January, Mrs. Jordan asked if a separate conversation could be held to discuss a **RAD Conversion at Alder Creek** and that she would ask for a motion of approval from the commissioners as an action item.

The Vice-Chairperson allowed for Mrs. Jordan to proceed.

The management team at Alder Creek is interested in Rental Assistance Demonstration transaction (RAD). RAD is a HUD federal housing program that allows PHA's the opportunity to convert Public Housing units into Section 8 units. There are 56 affordable housing units at Alder Creek (42 Public Housing Units and 14 Project Based Units). Converting out of the public housing program is much more complicated with a smaller PHA like NHA where doing so will have a major impact on our operations.

The Vice-Chairperson what are some pros and cons?

Mrs. Jordan responded, "Pros:

- No immediate economic benefit for NHA."

Mrs. Jordan responded, "Cons:

- Loss of revenue streams applicable to Public Housing Units once the conversion is complete."

Commissioner Lucas inquired as to if more vouchers would be issued.

Mrs. Jordan responded, “A RAD conversion will not afford NHA an opportunity to issue additional vouchers. The tenants that occupy these 42 units will not have to move. The program that they participate in would change from Public Housing to a form of Section 8 (Project Based).”

Attorney Gouge mentioned, “With George Read Village being the focal point, it’s not a good time to consider a conversion”.

Mrs. Jordan recommended that the board vote on this for the record.

Attorney Gouge made a motion that the Commissioners are in support of the motion made by him (attorney) of not having any interest in a RAD deal for Alder Creek. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Brown.

V. Committee Reports:

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

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

- (a). Discussion regarding a Real Estate Transaction – Executive Session (Closed to the Public); to be held at 4:30 PM prior to this regularly scheduled meeting. Revision/Approval of Resolution #382-B.

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Brown, was present for this committee update. An Executive Session was held prior to this meeting. A discussion regarding Resolution #382-B was discussed. No action was taken, and it was tabled until the next meeting.

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

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

Mrs. Jordan reported that on Monday, February 12, 2024, City Council approved to advance the redevelopment of George Read Village. The approval included:

- A bill to amend the comprehensive development plan by changing the designation of the property located at 313 E. Main Street.
- A bill to amend the zoning for a two phased re-development of 2.44 acres.
- Approval of major subdivisions with site plan approval to advance the redevelopment plans.

Commissioners in attendance were:

- Chairperson Lane

- Vice-Chairperson Tillman
- Commissioner Tompkins

Mrs. Jordan reported that the relocation process is moving along nicely. Only five of the eleven residents that will be impacted during Phase I are still in need of off-site housing. She reported that Victoria Mews Apartments have been very accommodating during this process and there are some private landlords with upcoming vacancies expected to take on a few of our residents.

Commissioner Brown inquired into whether we have found office space.

Mrs. Jordan responded, "I was able to tour a commercial space off Kirkwood Highway. It presents well with 5 offices but does not offer a meeting room. However, it does present a challenge for travel for our seniors.

Commissioner Tillman stated, "Mrs. Jordan is cost conscious and wants rents to be reasonable. But, if she is looking for rental space off Main Street, rent could be in the neighborhood of \$3,000 - 4,000 a month when you compare it to the cost of a 2-bedroom apartment at Colonial Gardens." He asked if anyone knew of a location. He mentioned the Panera Bread location and because of the existing remote work situations, there should be some commercial spaces available.

Commissioner Brown mentioned that any available space in Newark will be pricey.

Commissioner Tompkins stated, "There is a property next to Bings Bakery that is available."

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

(a). Committee Report - Monthly Financials:

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Tillman, was present for the update. Commissioner Tillman confirmed that everyone received the financial reports. The financial reports covered the period from April 2023 through December 2023; 9 months into the budget. The percentage of income is at 81% while the percentage of expenses is at 75%. He mentioned that last month's net income was approximately \$45,000 and for this reporting period the net income is approximately \$21,000. There is no issue with only 3 months left in the fiscal year. He stated that in his review the reports appear to be in order.

Commissioner Brown asked if there was anything that stood out.

Commissioner Tillman responded, "No more than usual. There are some budget line items that are over budget and others that are under budget as reported in previous months. We just need to keep an eye on net income."

Commissioner Tillman asked if there were any other questions regarding the financial reports.

(b). Proposed FY 2025 Operating Budget:

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Tillman, asked Mrs. Jordan to present. Mrs. Jordan referred to the proposed budget for FY 2025. She mentioned that she is not seeking board approval today, but approval is needed at the next meeting in March. She proceeded stating, "Our budget is straightforward. There is no real deviation from one year to the next. On page #2, the budget comparisons, from 2024 to 2025 there is a difference of \$21,344 in cost. Pretty consistent.

The revenue portion of the budget is a projection based on:

- Rental income
- Subsidy based on HUD approval.

As far as expenses, for this year, more assumptions were made because of Geroge Read Village. We know that some of our expenses will be less than what is stated in the budget. So, we estimated these expenses. For example:

- Property Insurance will decrease.
- Utilities will decrease. Specifically, utilities paid by NHA on behalf of senior residents.
- With new construction, maintenance will decrease.

The last point I would like to make is historically NHA likes to present zero-based budgets. On page #1, FY 2025 Operating Budget, the budget reflects an excess in revenue over expenses. So, the LIPH excess revenue of \$56,015 will be moved to General Expenses for a grant total of \$68,765. For the HCV excess revenue of \$6,833 will be moved to General Expenses thus showing a zero-based budget. I will circulate a revised budget illustrating a zero-based budget next week.

Please review and if you have any questions or comments, please let me know."

(c). CFP Grant 2020 – Approaching Obligation End Date (3/25/2024):

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Tillman, asked Mrs. Jordan to provide an update on this topic. Mrs. Jordan reported receiving an alert from its field office that the Capital Fund Program (CFP) grant for 2020 has an obligation end date (OED) of March 25, 2024. The grant must be obligated at least 90% before the OED. Specifically, the funds that are budgeted in BLI 1406 (operations) but are not drawn down. In order for these funds to be obligated, the funds must be disbursed to be considered fully obligated. Therefore, a draw of \$154,744 was discussed during the finance meeting. To avoid any penalty/recapture, the draw was made and approved on January 29, 2024. The funds were received.

Commissioner Tillman mentioned asking questions during the finance meeting and was assured that this is not uncommon for housing authorities to make draws like this. He understood the obligation and expense date for the funds.

The Vice-Chairperson called for the report from the Strategic Planning Committee.

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

(a). May 10, 2024, Commissioners’ Retreat Update

The Chairperson for the sub-committee was not present. However, Commissioner Brown was prepared to provide an update on the planned Commissioner’s Retreat. As previously reported, the Chairperson and Commissioner Brown are strategically collaborating for this event.

Commissioner Brown reported on the progress of the Commissioner Retreat. He mentioned that a “save the date” was sent for May 10, 2024. The Event will be held in Marydel, Delaware. He mentioned that a lot of business hold their retreats there. The retreat will consist of 2 days, and you must attend both dates to receive your certificate of participation. Day one is planned for May 10, 2024, at the Winery in Marydel, Delaware and the 2nd day will be held at NHA on June 7, 2024. He asked that the two dates provided be set aside for this retreat.

Commissioner Lucas inquired if she would be able to attend without having her Commissioner’s Certification.

Commissioner Brown responded, “You do not need to have a certification to attend the retreat. The retreat is for all commissioners. The 2nd day is when you will receive your certificate.”

VI. Attorney Issues:

There were no attorney issues to report.

VII. Old Business:

- A. From the other Commissioners: None
- B. From the Executive Director:
Mr. Gouge reported there are two landlord cases scheduled for March 1st and the 18th. He will report more on the cases once they occur.
- C. From Legal Counsel: None.

VIII. New Business:

- A. From Commissioners: None
- B. From the Executive Director:

(a). Discussion Regarding Board Appointments Recommendations.

Mr. Gouge reported that he did send a letter to the Governor's Office on January 11, 2024 but has not received a response.

Commissioner Tillman mentioned having a conversation with State Representative Baumbach regarding some names for consideration.

Mrs. Jordan mentioned receiving an email from State Representative Baumbach requesting a copy of the procedures adopted as a recommendation from the Joint Sunset Review Committee. Mrs. Jordan provided a copy of the section of the onboarding procedural manual for new commissioners that referenced appointments, responsibilities, and terms. She also mentioned the advantage of recommending or assigning someone with a skill set or background in real estate or development knowledge would be preferred as we move forward with George Read Village.

(b). Approval of MOU to Align HCV Administration Policies for all 5-PHAs.

Commissioner Tillman referred to the MOU and asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Gouge commented that he has read the MOU. The language is standard and does not present to be a problem for NHA to sign.

Commissioner Brown mentioned the agreement does not have any dates.

Mr. Gouge commented that the dates would be valid when the MOU is signed. That is normal and standard operating procedure.

Commissioner Tillman asked, "So there is no conflict or harm to come to NHA.?"

Mr. Gouge responded, "No."

Commissioner Tillman asked for a motion for Mrs. Jordan to sign the MOU as presented.

Commissioner Brown made a motion for Mrs. Jordan to sign the MOU. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tompkins.

Aye 4 (Brown, Tompkins, Lucas and Moone)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to 0

- C. From Legal Counsel: Mr. Gouge reported that he reviewed the proposed gross receipts for rental properties for students proposed by the City of Newark. He reported that the increase would not affect NHA or any of our rental properties as we are exempt.

X. Adjournment:

The Vice-Chairperson asked for a motion for the meeting to adjourn. Commissioner Brown made the motion for the meeting to adjourn. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tompkins.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 6:01 PM

Minutes Submitted by: Marene M. Jordan, Executive Director

APPROVED