



313 East Main Street • Newark, Delaware 19711 • Telephone/TDD 302-366-0826 • Fax 302-366-8212

**Newark Housing Authority
Board of Commissioners
March 13, 2024**

Summary of Meeting (In-Person) Minutes

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, Paul Tillman, Kelly Tompkins, Emile Brown, and Abeo Lucas. Marene Jordan (Executive Director) and Attorney Donald Gouge Jr. were also present.

Absent Commissioners: Commissioner Keith Moone Sr.

Note: One Board Member Vacancy – Governor Appointment

II. Visitors and/or Petition:

The 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.

III. Approval of Minutes:

(a). Meeting Minutes from February 14, 2024

The Chairperson acknowledged that the meeting minutes for February 14, 2024, were circulated and everyone had time to review them. She asked if there were any questions regarding the meeting minutes. Since there were none, she asked for a motion to approve those meeting minutes. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tompkins.

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

(b). Executive Session Meeting Minutes from February 14, 2024 - Tabled

IV. Report of the Executive Director:

(a). Staff Report from February 2024

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

Next Phase of City of Newark Submission for GRV:

The Submission of the Construction Improvement Plan was submitted on February 22, 2024. The review has begun.

Public Housing Tenant Inquiry into Family Reentry Program:

While the PHAs are still working on the relaunch of the Family Reentry Program, the State was contacted by one of our scattered site families interested in applying for the program. Unfortunately, the tenant is not in good standing. She received a violation notice in part for having an unauthorized guest.

Centralized Waiting list continued:

The collaboration among all five PHAs continues. We are waiting for direction after creation of the nonprofit.

Streamlining the Housing Choice Voucher process:

The collaboration among all five PHAs continued with an in-person meeting that was held in Dover. NHA did not attend this meeting, but progress continues to be made.

Update on Source of Income/Landlord Mitigation:

DSHA met with Senator Lockman (the sponsor for both bills), the Delaware Apartment Association, the Greater Wilmington Housing Providers and CLASI to discuss the source of income and landlord mitigation bills and their relationship to our streamlining efforts. Since we are in the preliminary stages of our streamlining of the voucher program and due to some recent recommendations, there are no immediate plans to introduce the bill yet.

City of Newark Proposed Gross Receipts Tax for Rental Properties:

One of the exemptions proposed for this tax are properties that receive subsidy at the Federal, State, or local level. This means any unit that is funded by a voucher from NHA or owned by NHA would be exempt from paying this tax.

University of Delaware Intern:

Through the efforts of our Chairperson, NHA will have the administrative support from a UD intern. The intern would be assisting with all aspects of administrative duties as well as having some responsibilities in assisting with the meeting associated with George Read Village. The proposal and budget are being prepared for review and approval.

Gross Receipts Tax:

During City Council's last meeting, the vote was passed 6 to 1 for a 1% Gross Receipt Tax. The next step is for legislative approval.

George Read Redevelopment, 3rd Informational Resident Meeting:

NHA will host another resident informational meeting on Thursday, March 14, 2024. The purpose of this meeting is to update the Low-Income public Housing tenants on recent developments.

Admin Position:

This position remains vacant.

Maintenance Personnel Turnover:

A new maintenance employee was hired and will begin in March. There will be no disruption in addressing work order needs.

Potential Offsite Office Rentals:

NHA was able to tour several locations as a possibility for temporary office space during Phase I of construction which is inclusive of office space for NHA.

- 523 Capital Trail, Newark, De 19711 @ \$25.80 SF
- Lang Development (Main Street) @ \$25.00 SF
- 249 E. Main Street @ \$14 - \$16 SF

Ms. Jordan acknowledged inviting Commissioner Tillman to tour 249 E. Main Street along with staff and a contractor. Ms. Jordan referred to the term sheet that was provided in the commissioners' packet provided by the owner. After a brief discussion, Attorney Gouge, with the assistance of the Chairperson, will follow up on logistics and a possible lease agreement.

The Chairperson asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the Staff Report. There were none. She asked for a motion to approve the report. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the Staff Report for February 2024. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tompkins.

Aye 4 (Tillman, Brown, Tompkins, and Lucas)
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, 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-A/B/C.

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-C was discussed and approved.

The Chairperson called for the report from the Development Committee.

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

- (a). Development Update.

Ms. Jordan reported that we are on schedule for a July closing. The schedule/timing is mostly driven by the city's approval of the construction documents. Delaware State Housing is proposing to take our project to their Housing Council in May which initiates the closing process.

NHA is working on the Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPV) application and funding for the 36 units at George Read Village which was a part of the SAC/HUD office application approval. I should have the application submitted by early April.

NHA received an email from a representative from Efficiency Smart. Efficiency Smart is a free energy efficiency program for the city of Newark and its electric customers. Their role is to help customers find ways to lower their electrical usage and lower operating costs that could offer rebates. The George Read Village team is looking into this program that may offer cost savings rebates.

NHA received a copy of the purchase agreement from Solair Green Energy Advisors for the solar initiatives for George Read Village. The agreement is still pending.

Regarding relocation, Ms. Jordan stated, "I personally would like to take a few minutes to acknowledge how cooperative our seniors have been throughout this relocation process for Phase I. We have identified off-site housing for all but 2 residents. The community has really accommodated our residents. Victoria Mews, Colonial Gardens, Harbor Club (outside city limits) and a private landlord have managed to keep our residents centrally located within minutes from NHA. As far as on-site housing is concerned, we are anticipating that the 3 current residents who will be moving to another building (not part of Phase I demolition) are to be provided with the keys to those units after the conclusion of the resident meeting on Thursday."

Ms. Jordan asked if there were any questions on her report.

Chairperson Lane inquired into as to where we are in assisting the 2 residents that need housing.

Ms. Jordan responded, "One resident was offered a unit and declined it. He was approved for an efficiency unit. We are in close contact with his daughter who is assisting him during this process. We reminded them that this is temporary. The other resident has taken no action but has indicated that he will be staying with a friend during the construction period."

Chairperson Lane further commented that we need to make sure our records reflect the decision the residents are making, so that we have proof of our assisting them throughout this process.

Chairperson Lane asked if there are any other comments on questions. Since there were none, she moved onto the next agenda item.

Chairperson Lane called for the report from the Finance Committee.

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 had received the financial reports. The financial reports covered the period from April 2023 through January 2024 (10 months into the budget). As stated in previous months, we are within budget. We do have budget line items that are over budget and some that are under budget, but the reports appear to be in order. He reported the same for the Voucher Program. Ms. Jordan referred to the budget vs. actual report for the LIPH program and referred to the income section; budget line item 3692.70 – CFP Operations Transfer In \$154,744. She referred to last month that had an obligation end date of March 25, 2024, to have at least 90% of the funds disbursed. The funds under BLI 1406 (operations) must be disbursed to be considered fully obligated. The request was approved, and funds were received.

Chairperson Lane asked what residents services are.

Ms. Jordan responded, "We have recently used this budget line item to reimburse seniors for application fees they pay for. Hotel stay for residents is another."

Commissioner Tillman asked if there were any other questions regarding the financial reports. Since there were none, he moved onto his next committee item.

(b). Approval of FY 2025 Operating Budget, Resolution #421:

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Tillman, acknowledged that Ms. Jordan did provide a revised zero-based budget. He asked if there were any questions regarding the proposed budget for 2025. Ms. Jordan reminded everyone of what the revisions were to present a zero-based budget. For the LIPH program, the budget showed excess revenue over expense of \$56,015. This excess revenue was moved to the general expense budget line item for a total of \$68,765. Likewise, for the HCV budget the excess revenue was moved to the general expenses budget line item for a total of \$6,833 thus showing a zero-based budget operation wide. But overall, the budget is the budget.

Commissioner Tillman asked if there were any comments or questions regarding the budget. Since there were none, he made a motion to approve the FY 2025 operating budget. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Brown.

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

(c). FYE Write-Offs – Resolution #420:

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Tillman, asked Mrs. Jordan to present. Mrs. Jordan referred to Resolution No. 420 for the period covering April 1, 2023 – March 13, 2024. The write-off total was inclusive of rent owed and other charges totaling \$4,380.59 representing 2.5% of total rent billed for this reporting period. Reference was made to rent due represented unreported income. Commissioner Brown commented that this is standard procedure. Ms. Jordan confirmed Commissioner Brown's statement. Ms. Jordan added that attorney Gouge had filed a debt action claim.

Ms. Jordan asked if there were any other questions or comments. There were none.

Chairperson Lane asked for a motion to approve Resolution No. 420. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the Resolution. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tillman.

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

The 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 of the sub-committee was present. However, she asked Commissioner Brown to provide the update. Commissioner Brown confirmed the date of May 10, 2024, as the first date of the retreat. The event will be held in Marydel, Delaware. The retreat will consist of 2 days, and you must attend both dates to receive your certificate of participation. 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. An agenda will be forthcoming.

Chairperson Lane confirmed that our attorney and accountant are aware of the dates, especially for May 10th so that they are included on the agenda.

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: None.

VIII. New Business:

- A. From Commissioners:

Chairperson Lane mentioned that in a House Bill “tenant’s right to legal representation” must be given to tenants informing them of their right to have an attorney. The notice must be sent to tenants during termination, lease renewal or new lease.

Chairperson Lane mentioned a colleague of hers, on the CDBG committee, inquired about what energy efficient measures we are taking for George Read Village. That information was provided. The colleague just wanted to make sure some measures were included.

- B. From the Executive Director:

(a). MARC NAHRO Conference – Atlantic City (April 28, 2024 – May 1, 2024).

Ms. Jordan announced the location and dates for the next NAHRO Conference. No action taken.

C. From Legal Counsel:

Mr. Gouge reported that he had a court hearing for a tenant who had some police activity involving an unauthorized person. JP court determined that there is no landlord-tenant relationship with the defendant. Mr. Gouge referenced that if the defendant continues to remain as an unauthorized person to notify the City of Newark Police Department.

Mr. Gouge reported there is an upcoming court hearing for a tenant with multiple violations. NHA completed due process by holding an informal and grievance hearings per policy. Both hearing officers upheld NHA's decision to terminate the lease agreement. It is expected that this will be a ½ day trial as 42 exhibits were filed on behalf of NHA.

Lastly, Mr. Gouge reported being contacted by a former tenant who left owing money. A debt action claim was filed in JP court, then transferred to Superior Court. The tenant made payment for the full amount including interest.

Before the meeting adjourned, the Chairperson asked our visitor if she had any comments or questions.

Ms. Pollack responded, "No" but indicated that she enjoyed the meeting.

X. Adjournment:

The 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 5:46 PM

Minutes Submitted by: Marene M. Jordan, Executive Director