



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

**Newark Housing Authority
Board of Commissioners
April 10, 2024
Revised May 8, 2024**

Summary of Meeting (In-Person) Minutes

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at approximately 5:07 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, Emile Brown, and Abeo Lucas. Marene Jordan (Executive Director) and Attorney Donald Gouge Jr. were also present.

Absent Commissioners: Kelly Thompson and Keith Moone Sr.

Note: One Board Member Vacancy – Governor Appointment

II. Visitors and/or Petition:

The Chairperson acknowledged our visitors and asked them to identify themselves for the record.

Janet Schwartz, Lisa Mills, Katherine Day, and Ellen Pollack, senior residents from Independence Circle were the visitors.

The Chairperson asked if any of our visitors would like to take a few minutes to share any comments or concerns they may have. Ms. Mills commented that 3 out of the 4 senior residents present were residents involved in the Phase I move. Ms. Mills complimented the crew from Delaware Moving and Storage for their assistance with their moves. The compliments continued with the other residents agreeing that the crew did a wonderful job.

The Chairperson confirmed that they were satisfied with their moves.

Ms. Day said, “Yes, the team was very good and strong.”

The Chairperson thanked them for attending and sharing their experiences.

III. Approval of Minutes:

(a). Meeting Minutes from March 13, 2024

The Chairperson acknowledged that the meeting minutes for March 13, 2024, were received. She asked if there were any questions or revisions to 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 Tillman.

Aye 3 (Tillman, Brown, and Lucas)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 3 to 0

- (b). Executive Session Meeting Minutes from February 14, 2024 - Tabled
- (c). Executive Session Meeting Minutes from March 13, 2024 - Tabled

IV. Report of the Executive Director:

(a). Staff Report from March 2024

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

Streamlining the Housing Choice Voucher process:

No update this month. Status pending.

University of Delaware Intern:

A follow-up email was sent on March 21, 2024. Status pending.

Offsite Rental Office:

Status is pending at 249 East Main Street. The offsite rental will be discussed later in the meeting.

Community Reinvestment Funds:

Representative Cyndie Romer, District 25, of Delaware House of Representatives notified NHA of available Bond Funding. NHA is working on an application which is due in May. NHA's application will include an ask of \$750,000 to assist with capital improvements of our scattered site rental properties. NHA completed two renovations with the use of CDBG and Capital Funds. Currently, NHA has another unit undergoing renovations.

Admin Position:

This position remains vacant.

New Maintenance Personnel:

NHA welcomed Eric Williams as the new maintenance technician on March 25, 2024. Mr. Williams will be responsible for all general maintenance work assigned by NHA.

Fair Housing Training:

NHA staff participated in the annual DE NAHRO sponsored Fair Housing Training on March 7, 2024. Staff received a certificate of completion.

High Performer List for FFY 2024 & 2025 Capital Fund Grants:

Notification of all PHA's of their High Performer status was available on March 14, 2024. NHA was included on that list.

PIC Certification for FFY 2025 Capital Fund Grant:

NHA received notification that the certification period for FFY 2025 Capital Fund Grant is open. As of March 20, 2025, NHA recertified for this grant and is expected to receive a bonus for being ranked as a High Performer.

Unaudited Financials - FYE March 31, 2024:

NHA's fiscal year end is approaching March 31, 2024. We are preparing for the close-out with unaudited financials due to HUD by May 31, 2024.

Audited Financials – FYE March 31, 2024:

For planning purposes, NHA will set aside time in July for the commencement of the year-end audit. The audit will include both onsite and remote reviews.

George Read Village Resident Informational Meeting:

NHA hosted its 3rd informational meeting on March 14, 2024. In attendance were 15 residents. The purpose of this meeting was to update the residents on the most recent developments. The city council approved the plans on February 12, 2024, and the upcoming pre-development schedule. Q&A followed the meeting. In conclusion, NHA acknowledged the residents are doing a fantastic job in finding off-site housing in consultation with staff.

Housing Choice Voucher Invites:

NHA is currently inviting families off the voucher waiting list. A briefing will be held sometime in April for families approved to participate in the program and receive vouchers.

Relocation for GRV Phase I:

The relocation process of residents impacted during Phase I is nearing completion. As of March 21, 2024, only one resident remains needing to find off-site housing. Approval is pending. Many of the moves are scheduled for April 2024.

Ms. Jordan asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the staff report.

The Chairperson inquired as to what renovations were made to the scattered site rentals.

Ms. Jordan responded, "The renovations included new flooring throughout, new kitchen cabinets & appliances and renovated bathrooms." Ms. Jordan added, "Similar renovations will be made to the remaining scattered site rentals." She added, "Washer and dryers will be added (if rough plumbing is already in place). The exterior work will include new roofs and concrete work."

The Chairperson commented that she was pleased to hear the relocation for the 1st phase residents were happy with the movers.

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 March 2024. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tillman.

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):

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Brown, was present for the update. Commissioner Brown reconfirmed the Commissioners' retreat is scheduled for May 10th and June 7th, 2024. All funds for the event were received except for the luncheon for June 7th. The retreat is a 2-day event. Commissioners must attend both dates to receive NAHRO certificate of participation.

Commissioner Brown acknowledged emailing the pricing for an offsite storage facility. Storage USA (behind CarMax facility) has nine (9) 10' x 20' drive-up units available for a monthly fee of \$124. They allow payment in advance for up to one year. He recommended two (2) storage units to store items from the garage and appliances.

The Chairperson asked Commissioner Brown to follow-up by getting contact information and information for two (2) storage units and sending it to council for review and payment. Commissioner Brown inquired as to when we wanted the contract to start.

Ms. Jordan suggested June 1, 2024.

The Chairperson called for the report from the Development Committee.

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

(a). Development Update.

Relocation:

Ms. Jordan reported the relocation is moving along nicely. Only two families remain that need to be moved and all eleven have secured temporary housing. Moving expenses so far total \$10,878 charged to Capital Funds. Security Deposits paid so far total \$7,143 and HAP funds were used. Total Expenses to date are \$18,021.

Signage off Main Street:

The plans were approved with two signs. One would be off Main Street and the other off Tyre Avenue/Delaware Circle. The plans were submitted with 4 sq. ft. of signage. NHA submitted a request for a larger sign off Main Street and received approval. The approval included a sign that is a maximum of 60 sq. ft. with a maximum height of 18 ft. if the sign is consistent with the renderings. The City's response was shared with the Ingerman team authorizing a larger Newark Housing Authority sign off Main Street. Ms. Jordan suggested the new sign to mirror the existing sign. She asked if anyone had any suggestion or a preference.

Commissioner Brown suggested adding a partial digital sign to display meeting times and activities.

The Chairperson asked Ms. Jordan to have Ingerman look into price quotes for some sort of digital sign.

Name for access road through the GRV development:

The Ingerman team is not sure of if the road through the development would require a name, but they wanted to prepare just in case. Some street names discussed included:

- George Read Way
- George Read Road
- George Read Drive

The feedback received (including from residents attending the meeting) was in favor of George Read Way. A final decision was tabled until the next meeting.

Tenant Access to Washers and Dryers:

This topic came up during the last resident information meeting. Ms. Jordan stated, “The Ingerman team is not sure how to address this. Someone suggested looking into a laundry service. There are only a handful of residents who use the laundry service onsite, so I am not sure how to accommodate those who do. Ms. Pollock (senior in attendance) is one resident who uses the laundry room onsite.”

Air Quality During Construction:

This also came up during the last resident meeting. Residents inquired as to what could be done for residents who have asthma or have difficulty breathing. Ms. Jordan responded, “This will be a construction site and we are not sure what can be done.”

Ms. Day (senior resident) commented, “If you (Marene) can control the dust you might as well find a solution for the noise that comes with construction. I am not looking forward to the noise because I like to sleep in, but there is only so much that you can control.”

The Chairperson thanked the residents for their comments. She asked if anyone else had any comments or questions. There were none. She moved onto the next committee report.

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 February 2024 (11 months into the budget) 91 and 2/3rds percent of the year. For the Public Housing report, the revenue is reported 123.61% vs. 93/13% for expenses reporting a surplus. For Section 8, the reports show a surplus. Lastly, for the report of business activities Chairperson Lane asked Ms. Jordan to look into the income vs. expense for this report. Last month the percentages equaled.

The Chairperson asked if there were any other questions regarding the financial reports. Since there were none, she moved onto the next committee item.

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 restated the dates, times, and location for the 2-day retreat, adding, "The agenda will be forthcoming. A certificate will be provided for all who attend both days."

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 asked the residents in attendance if they would like to provide a comment regarding their experience during the 1st phase relocation. The residents were happy to share their comments. Chairperson Lane asked Ms. Jordan to follow-up with the residents.

- B. From the Executive Director: None

- C. From Legal Counsel:

Attorney Gouge reported, "A JP Court hearing was held on March 18th for a participant who committed multiple lease violations. It was a long trial lasting approximately 6 hours. The tenant was Pro Se. The judge did allow for some leniency. I would expect an appeal."

Attorney Gouge reported on the proposed lease agreement for 249 E. Main Street (temporary office for NHA). In his view he stated, "What is proposed is a boilerplate lease. A lot of stuff is not applicable. We do not need to sign a personal guarantee. The document needs to be cleaned up."

Chairperson Lane inquired into the painting, cleaning and window a/c needed. She mentioned, "The agreement states water & sewer charges would be shared. Would it be best to include this in the rent?"

Attorney Gouge suggested we set up a zoom call with Marene to discuss the agreement. He would like Nikki to be included on that call because of her experience. Otherwise, he mentioned no real issues.

Before the meeting adjourned, the Chairperson asked our visitor(s) if they had any comments or questions.

Ms. Pollack responded, "Yes, I would like direct payments for my rent."

Ms. Schwartz wanted confirmation of these meetings being held.

Ms. Jordan confirmed, “The Board of Commissioners meeting are held every 2nd Wednesday of each month. Starting at 5 PM except for July and December.”

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 Tillman.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:50 PM

Minutes Submitted by: Marene M. Jordan, Executive Director

Approved