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**Newark Housing Authority
Board of Commissioners
May 8, 2024**

Summary of Meeting (In-Person) Minutes

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at approximately 5:03 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, Kelly Tompkins and Abeo Lucas. Marene Jordan (Executive Director) and Attorney Donald Gouge Jr. were also present.

Absent Commissioners: Keith Moone Sr.

Note: One Board Member Vacancy – Governor Appointment

II. Visitors and/or Petition:

The Chairperson acknowledged our visitor, Ellen Pollack, and asked if she had any comments. Ms. Pollack asked if there was an update on her request to have direct payments for her rent. Mrs. Jordan responded that she has received the information from the bank but has not had time to review it. Ms. Pollack mentioned that she does not want it to be mandatory but is interested. Mrs. Jordan responded, “Moving forward with direct payments will be contingent upon how many residents express interest and cost and fees associated with it.”

The Chairperson asked if she was interested in having her bank electronically send NHA her rent payment. She responded, “No. I do not trust mail delivery.” The Chairperson mentioned that in the event if it’s not cost effective for the agency, she might want to have a plan B.

III. Approval of Minutes:

(a). Meeting Minutes from April 10, 2024

The Chairperson asked if everyone had time to review the minutes and if there were edits to be made. Commissioner Tompkins mentioned her last name was misspelled. Since that was the only edit, the Chairperson 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 4 (Tillman, Brown, Tompkins and Lucas)
Nay 0
Motion passed, Vote: 4 to**

(b). Executive Session Meeting Minutes from March 13, 2024

The Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the Executive Session meeting minutes from March 13, 2024. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tillman.

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

(c). Executive Session Meeting Minutes from February 14, 2024

The Chairperson asked for a motion to approve the Executive Session meeting minutes from February 14, 2024. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was 2nd by Commissioner Tillman.

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

IV. Report of the Executive Director:

(a). Staff Report from April 2024

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

Streamlining the Housing Choice Voucher process:

An in-person meeting was held on April 24, 2024, in Middletown Delaware to discuss the next steps. Topics discussed were:

- Areas for streamlining the pre-move in process (forms/inspections)
- Process for Landlord request for rent increases and approvals.
- Annual Inspection Process (annual vs. bi-annual)
- Landlord outreach
- Financial and Benefit Programs – Incentives for Landlords such as Vacancy Payments/Damage Claim Fund

The date for the next meeting is pending.

Centralized Waiting List:

The Centralized Waiting List Task Force continues to make progress. Before we can submit to the IRS, we need to figure out a name. Choices were:

- 1- "Delaware Housing Hub: Streamlining Access to Affordable Housing"
- 2- "Unified Access Delaware: One Waitlist for All Public Housing Needs"
- 3- "Community Housing Connections: Simplifying Access to Housing Assistance"
- 4- "Delaware Housing Coalition: Bridging Gaps with a Consolidated Waitlist"
- 5- "Access Delaware Housing: A Single Point of Entry for Public Housing Needs"

The group selected #5 of the suggested names.

Bullets on the documents:

- The Board of Directors is composed of the Executive Directors from each housing authority, as outlined in the Bylaws.
- Internal decisions such as appointing officers or committees to manage the centralized waitlist and oversee organizational operations are left to the discretion of the Board.
- This approach allows flexibility for the Board to make determinations internally, avoiding the need for frequent amendments to the Bylaws.
- By not including detailed procedural requirements in the Bylaws, the Board can efficiently adapt and make decisions as needed.
- Empowering the Board to manage internal matters promotes effective governance and operational efficiency.
- A discussion with WHA's legal team of the best way to form the non-profit.

Meetings are held every week if necessary.

Offsite Rental Office:

As of May 6, 2024, the lease agreement for 249 East Main Street, Suite 103 was signed, security deposit paid, and keys received. NHA will begin renovations.

Community Reinvestment Funds:

NHA submitted an application on May 6, 2024, that included an ask of \$750,000 to assist with capital needs for the scattered sites. NHA has renovated 3 out of 16 properties. The funds used for the renovations were

CDBG and Capital funds. NHA is working on its 2nd application for \$300,000 for energy efficiency improvements for George Read Village. Applications are due May 15, 2024.

Changing the Landscape Event:

DE NAHRO and Housing and Community Development Leaders will host the “Changing the Landscape” event scheduled for May 17, 2024, at the Maple Dale Country Club. The event is scheduled to inform and discuss new ideas and trends to address Delaware’s current and future challenges in affordable housing. NHA and a few commissioners are registered to attend.

Admin Position:

NHA welcomed Ra’Nyah Brunson on April 23, 2024, to fill the admin position. Ms. Brunson will be assisting in all administrative duties to support the day-to-day tasks of the authority as assigned.

George Read Village Resident Informational Meeting:

NHA will host its 4th and final resident information meeting sometime in May or June to answer any additional questions the residents may have as we prepare for Phase 1 demolition.

Housing Choice Voucher Invites:

NHA continues to invite families off the voucher waiting list. A briefing will be held sometime in May for families approved to participate in the program and receive vouchers.

Website Posting:

As a follow-up to the board meeting held last month, Mrs. Jordan acknowledged the residents who attended the meeting and were part of the Phase 1 relocation provided a statement of their move which was posted onto our website.

Mrs. Jordan thanked the Chairperson and Attorney for their due diligence in the review of the rental agreement for 249 E. Main Street, Suite 103 (temporary office space for NHA). The Chairperson asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the Staff Report.

Ellen Pollack asked if the public transportation providers (Dart and Newark Connect) were notified of the pending redevelopment. She added several residents use public transportation.

Mrs. Jordan added, “The public transportation providers will have access to the development just not to residential buildings 6,7,8,9,10 and the admin building due to the commencement of Phase 1 construction.

The chairperson asked if there were any additional questions or comments. Since there were none, she asked for a motion to approve the report. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the Staff Report for April 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):

The Chairperson of this sub-committee, Mr. Brown, was present for the update. Commissioner Brown reconfirmed that the Commissioners' Retreat is scheduled for May 10th and June 7th, 2024. Commissioners must attend both dates to receive the NAHRO certificate of participation.

Commissioner Brown reported two (2) storage units were reserved for NHLA for 10 months with 2 months offered for a promotion. All information was provided to the director.

The Chairperson and Mrs. Jordan thanked Commissioner Brown for the handling of this task.

The Chairperson called for the report from the Development Committee.

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

- (a). Development Update.

Relocation:

Mrs. Jordan reported that the relocation for all 11 seniors is complete. She thanked Harbor Club Apartments (located just outside the city limits), Victoria Mews and Colonial Gardens.

Mrs. Jordan also reported that the CIP submission is under review which should address their questions. The Newark sign (as recommended to include a digital display of activities) is pending. The street name for the access road off Main Street is also pending. However, Geoge Read Way was the recommendation.

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. He reported that the Fee Accountant will be reporting finances during the retreat.

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. Commissioner Brown reconfirmed the dates, times, and locations for the 2-day retreat. He added, “To receive a certificate Commissioners must attend both days.” The agenda was circulated as part of the board packet. The agenda included:

- Reception
- Training
- Lunch
- Finance Update
- Legal Update

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: Attorney Gouge reported:

A trial De Novo is scheduled for May 9, 2024, for a program participant who all are familiar with. The trial is expected to last all day. On behalf of NHA, 43 exhibits were filed. In the first case, we prevailed.

Attorney Gouge added, “NHA is scheduled for a debt action claim on May 16, 2024, for alleged water damages. We have a lot of viable defenses for this case. The case will be held by the insurance attorney, but I will also be in attendance.”

Commissioner Brown inquired into if there was an update on the board appointment.

Attorney Gouge responded, “I sent a follow-up letter but have not received a response.” The attorney added, “Filling a Governor’s appointment takes time as there are appointments needing to be made to several different boards statewide.”

VIII. New Business:

- A. From Commissioners: The Chairperson mentioned a Statewide Tenant's Rights and Responsibilities Guide similar to New Castle County that will be proposed soon.
- B. From the Executive Director: None
- C. From Legal Counsel: None

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 5:40 PM

Minutes Submitted by: Marene M. Jordan, Executive Director

Approved